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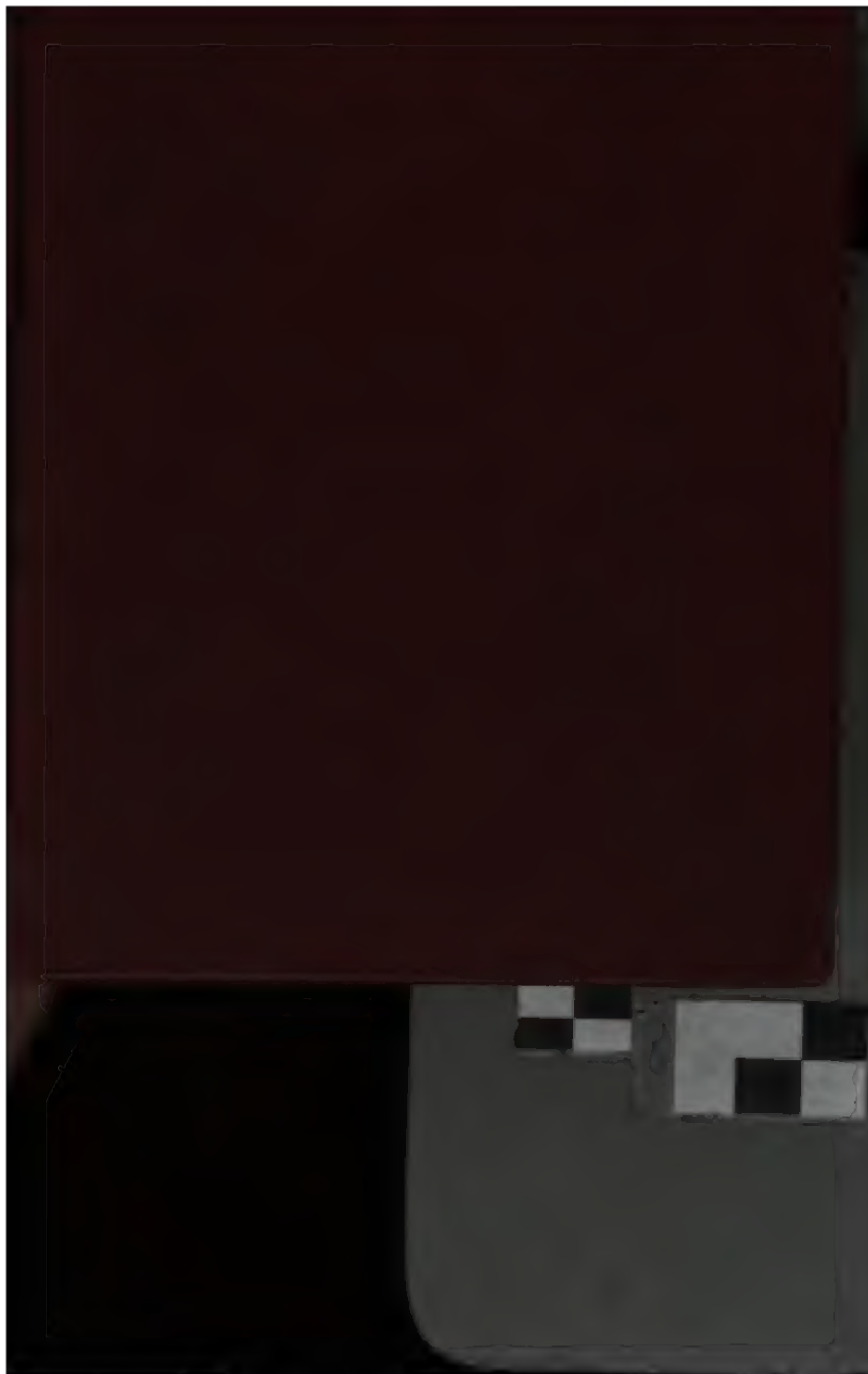
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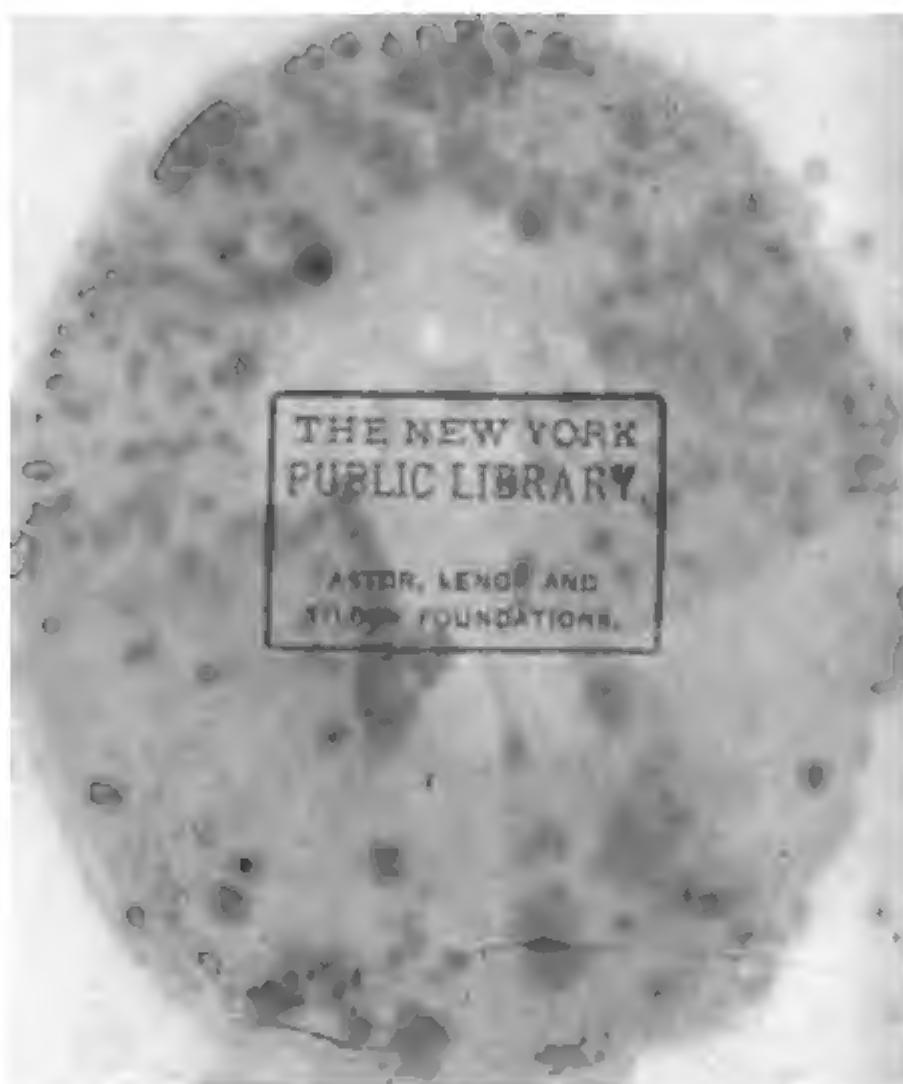












11.11.11



W<sup>th</sup> ROBERTSON. D.D.

THE  
HISTORY  
OF  
A M E R I C A.

BY WILLIAM ROBERTSON, D.D.

PRINCIPAL OF THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH, HISTORIO-  
GRAPHER TO HIS MAJESTY FOR SCOTLAND, AND MEMBER  
OF THE ROYAL ACADEMY OF HISTORY AT MADRID.

*In which is included,*

THE HISTORY OF VIRGINIA, TO THE YEAR 1688;  
AND OF NEW ENGLAND, TO THE YEAR 1652.

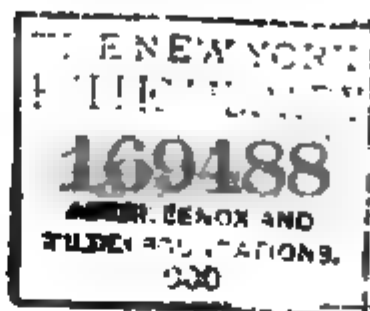
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## PREFACE.



**I**N fulfilling the engagement which I had come under to the Public with respect to the HISTORY of AMERICA, it was my intention not to have published any part of the work until the whole was completed. The present state of the British Colonies has induced me to alter that resolution. While they are engaged in civil war with Great Britain, inquiries and speculations concerning their ancient forms of policy and laws, which exist no longer, cannot be interesting. The attention and expectation of mankind are now turned towards their future condition. In whatever manner this unhappy contest may terminate, a new order of things must arise in North America, and its affairs will assume another aspect. I wait, with the solicitude of a good citizen, until the ferment subside, and regular government be re-established, and then I shall return to this part of my work, in which I had made some progress. That, together with the history of Portuguese America, and of the settlements made by the several nations of Europe in the West India islands, will complete my plan.

The three volumes which I now publish, contain an account of the discovery of the New World, and of the progress of the Spanish arms and colonies there. This is not only the most splendid portion of the American story, but so much detached, as, by itself, to form a perfect whole, remarkable for the unity of the subject. As the principles and maxims of the Spaniards in planting colonies, which have been adopted in some measure by every nation, are unfolded in this part of my work, it will serve as a proper introduction to the history of all the European establishments in America, and convey such information concerning this important article of policy, as may be deemed no less interesting than curious.

In describing the achievements and institutions of the Spaniards in the New World, I have departed in many instances from the accounts of preceding historians, and have often related facts which seem to have been unknown to them. It is a duty I owe the Public to mention the sources from which I have derived such intelligence, as justifies me either in placing transactions in a new light, or



in forming any opinion with respect to their causes and effects. This duty I perform with greater satisfaction, as it will afford an opportunity of expressing my gratitude to those benefactors, who have honoured me with their countenance and aid in my researches.

As it was from Spain that I had to expect the most important information, with regard to this part of my work, I considered it as a very fortunate circumstance for me, when Lord Grantham, to whom I had the honour of being personally known, and with whose liberality of sentiment, and disposition to oblige, I was well acquainted, was appointed Ambassador to the Court of Madrid. Upon applying to him, I met with such a reception as satisfied me that his endeavours would be employed in the most proper manner, in order to obtain the gratification of my wishes; and I am perfectly sensible, that what progress I have made in my inquiries among the Spaniards, ought to be ascribed chiefly to their knowing how much his Lordship interested himself in my success.

But did I owe nothing more to Lord Grantham, than the advantages which I have derived from his attention in engaging Mr. Waddilove, the chaplain of his embassy, to take the conduct of my literary inquiries in Spain, the obligations I lie under to him would be very great. During five years, that gentleman has carried on researches for my behoof, with such activity, perseverance, and knowledge of the subject, to which his attention was turned, as have filled me with no less astonishment than satisfaction. He procured for me the greater part of the Spanish books which I have consulted; and as many of them were printed early in the sixteenth century, and are become extremely rare, the collecting of these was such an occupation, as, alone, required much time and assiduity. To his friendly attention I am indebted for copies of several valuable manuscripts, containing facts and details which I might have searched for in vain, in works that have been made public. Encouraged by the inviting good-will with which Mr. Waddilove conferred his favours, I transmitted to him a set of queries, with respect both to the customs and policy of the native Americans, and the nature of several institutions in the Spanish settlements, framed in such a manner, that a Spaniard might answer them, without disclosing any thing that was improper to be communicated to a foreigner. He

translated these into Spanish, and obtained from various persons who had resided in most of the Spanish colonies; such replies as have afforded me much instruction.

Notwithstanding those peculiar advantages with which my inquiries were carried on in Spain, it is with regret I am obliged to add, that their success must be ascribed to the beneficence of individuals, not to any communication by public authority. By a single arrangement of Philip II. the records of the Spanish monarchy are deposited in the Archivo of Simancas, near Valladolid, at the distance of a hundred and twenty miles from the seat of government, and the supreme courts of justice. The papers relative to America, and chiefly to that early period of its history, towards which my attention was directed, are so numerous, that they alone, according to one account, fill the largest apartment in the Archivo; and according to another, they compose eight hundred and seventy-three large bundles. Conscious of possessing, in some degree, the industry which belongs to an historian, the prospect of such a treasure excited my most ardent curiosity. But the prospect of it, is all that I have enjoyed. Spain, with an excess of caution, has uniformly thrown a veil over her transactions in America. From strangers they are concealed with peculiar solicitude. Even to her own subjects the Archivo of Simancas is not opened without a particular order from the crown; and after obtaining that, papers cannot be copied, without paying fees of office so exorbitant, that the expence exceeds what it would be proper to bestow, when the gratification of literary curiosity is the only object. It is to be hoped, that the Spaniards will at last discover this system of concealment to be no less impolitic than illiberal. From what I have experienced in the course of my inquiries, I am satisfied, that upon a more minute scrutiny into their early operations in the New World, however reprehensible the actions of individuals may appear, the conduct of the nation will be placed in a more favourable light.

In other parts of Europe very different sentiments prevail. Having searched, without success, in Spain, for a letter of Cortes to Charles V. written soon after he landed in the Mexican empire, which has not hitherto been published, it occurred to me, that as the emperor was setting out for Germany at the time when the messengers from Cortes arrived in Europe, the letter with which they were intrusted

might possibly be preserved in the Imperial Library of Vienna. I communicated this idea to Sir Robert Murray Keith, with whom I have long had the honour to live in friendship, and I had soon the pleasure to learn that upon his application, her Imperial Majesty had been graciously pleased to issue an order, that not only a copy of that letter, (if it were found) but of any other papers in the library, which could throw light upon the History of America, should be transmitted to me. The letter from Cortes is not in the Imperial Library, but an authentic copy, attested by a notary, of the letter written by the magistrates of the colony planted by him at Vera Cruz, having been found, it was transcribed and sent to me. As this letter is no less curious, and as little known, as that which was the object of my inquiries, I have given some account, in its proper place, of what is most worthy of notice in it. Together with it, I received a copy of a letter from Cortes, containing a long account of his expedition to Honduras, with respect to which, I did not think it necessary to enter into any particular detail; and likewise those curious Mexican paintings, which I have described.

My inquiries at St. Petersburg were carried on with equal facility and success. In examining into the nearest communication between our continent and that of America, it became of consequence to obtain authentic information concerning the discoveries of the Russians in their navigation from Kamschatka towards the coast of America. Accurate relations of their first voyage, in 1741, have been published by Muller and Gmelin. Several foreign authors have entertained an opinion, that the court of Russia studiously conceals the progress which has been made by more recent navigators, and suffers the Public to be amused with false accounts of their route. Such conduct appeared to me unsuitable to those liberal sentiments, and that patronage of science, for which the present sovereign of Russia is eminent; nor could I discern any political reason, that might render it improper to apply for information concerning the late attempts of the Russians to open a communication between Asia and America. My ingenious countryman, Dr. Rogerson, first physician to the empress, presented my request to her Imperial Majesty, who not only disclaimed any idea of concealment, but instantly ordered the journal of Captain Crenitzin, who conducted the only voy-

age of discovery made by public authority since the year 1761, to be translated, and his original chart to be copied for my use. By consulting them, I have been enabled to give a more accurate view of the progress and extent of the Russian discoveries, than has hitherto been communicated to the Public.

From other quarters I have received information of great utility and importance. M. le Chevalier de Pinto, the Minister from Portugal to the court of Great Britain, who commanded for several years at Matagrosso, a settlement of the Portuguese in the interior part of Brazil, where the Indians are numerous, and their original manners little altered by intercourse with Europeans, was pleased to send me very full answers to some queries concerning the character and institutions of the natives of America, which his polite reception of an application made to him in my name, encouraged me to propose. These satisfied me, that he had contemplated with a discerning attention the curious objects which his situation presented to his view, and I have often followed him as one of my best instructed guides.

M. Suard, to whose elegant translation of the History of the Reign of Charles V. I owe the favourable reception of that work on the continent, procured me answers to the same queries from M. de Bougainville, who had opportunities of observing the Indians both of North and South America, and from M. Godin le Jeune, who resided fifteen years among the Indians in quito, and twenty years in Cayenne. The latter are more valuable from having been examined by M. de la Condamine, who, a few weeks before his death, made some short additions to them, which may be considered as the last effort of that attention to science which occupied a long life.

My inquiries were not confined to one region in America. Governor Hutchinson took the trouble of recommending the consideration of my queries to Mr. Hawley and Mr. Brainerd, two protestant missionaries, employed among the Indians of the Five Nations, who favoured me with answers, which discover a considerable knowledge of the people whose customs they describe. From William Smith, Esq; the ingenious historian of New York, I received some useful information. When I enter upon the History of our Colonies in North America, I shall have occasion to acknowledge how much I have been indebted to many other gentlemen of that country.

From the valuable Collection of Voyages made by Alexr. Dalrymple, Esq; with whose attention to the History of Navigation and Discovery the Public is well acquainted, I have received some very rare books, particularly two large volumes of Memorials, partly manuscript, and partly in print, which were presented to the court of Spain during the reigns of Philip III. and Philip IV. From these I have learned many curious particulars with respect to the interior state of the Spanish colonies, and the various schemes formed for their improvement. As this Collection of Memorials formerly belonged to the Colbert Library, I have quoted them by that title.

All those books and manuscripts I have consulted with that attention which the respect due from an author to the Public required; and by minute references to them, I have endeavoured to authenticate whatever I relate. The longer I reflect on the nature of historical composition, the more I am convinced that this scrupulous accuracy is necessary. The historian who records the events of his own time, is credited in proportion to the opinion which the Public entertains with respect to his means of information and his veracity. He who delineates the transactions of a remote period, has no title to claim assent, unless he produces evidence in proof of his assertions. Without this, he may write an amusing tale, but cannot be said to have composed an authentic history. In those sentiments I have been confirmed by the opinion of an author (Mr. Gibbon) whom his industry, erudition, and discernment have deservedly placed in high rank among the most eminent historians of the age.

My readers will observe, that in mentioning sums of money, I have uniformly followed the Spanish method of computing by *pesos*. In America, the *peso fuerte*, or *duro*, is the only one known, and that is always meant when any sum imported from America is mentioned. The *peso fuerte*, as well as other coins, has varied in its numerary value; but I have been advised, without attending to such minute variations, to consider it as equal to four shillings and sixpence of our money. It is to be remembered, however, that in the sixteenth century, the effective value of a *peso*, *i. e.* the quantity of labour which it represented, or of goods which it would purchase, was five or six times as much as at present.

*N. B.* Since this edition was put into the press, a History of Mexico, in two volumes in quarto, translated from the Italian of the Abbé D. Francesco, Saverio Clavigero, has been published. From a person, who is a native of New Spain, who has resided forty years in that country, and who is acquainted with the Mexican language, it was natural to expect much new information. Upon perusing his work, however, I find that it contains hardly any addition to the ancient History of the Mexican Empire, as related by Acosta and Herrera, but what is derived from the improbable narratives and fanciful conjectures of Torquemada and Boturini. Having copied their splendid descriptions of the high state of civilization in the Mexican empire, M. Clavigero, in the abundance of his zeal for the honour of his native country, charges me with having mistaken some points, and with having misrepresented others, in the History of it. When an author is conscious of having exerted industry in research and impartiality in decision, he may, without presumption, claim what praise is due to these qualities, and he cannot be insensible to any accusation that tends to weaken the force of his claim. A feeling of this kind has induced me to examine such strictures of M. Clavigero on my History of America as merited any attention, especially as these are made by one, who seemed to possess the means of obtaining accurate information; and to shew that the greater part of them is destitute of any just foundation. This I have done in notes upon the passages in my History, which gave rise to his criticisms.

COLLEGE of EDINBURGH,  
March 1, 1788.

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THE  
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BOOK I.

**T**HE progress of men in discovering and peopling the various parts of the earth, has been extremely slow. Several ages elapsed before they removed far from those mild and fertile regions in which they were originally placed by their Creator. The occasion of their first general dispersion is known; but we were unacquainted with the course of their migrations, or the time when they took possession of the different countries which they now inhabit. Neither history nor tradition furnish such information concerning those remote events, as enables us to trace, with any certainty, the operations of the human race in the infancy of society.

We may conclude, however, that all the early migrations of mankind were made by land. The ocean, which surrounds the habitable earth, as well as the various arms of the sea which separate one region from another, though destined to facilitate the communication between distant countries, seem, at first view, to be formed to check the progress of man, and to mark the bounds of the portion of the globe to which nature had confined him. It was long, we may believe, before men attempted to pass these formidable barriers, and become so skilful and adventurous as to commit themselves to the mercy of the



winds and waves, or to quit their native shores in quest of remote and unknown regions

Navigation and ship-building are arts so nice and complicated, that they require the ingenuity, as well as experience, of many successive ages to bring them to any degree of perfection. From the raft or canoe, which first served to carry a savage over the river that obstructed him in the chase, to the construction of a vessel capable of conveying a numerous crew with safety to a distant coast, the progress in improvement is immense. Many efforts would be made, many experiments would be tried, and much labour as well as invention would be employed, before men could accomplish this arduous and important undertaking. The rude and imperfect state in which navigation is still found among all nations which are not considerably civilized, corresponds with this account of its progress, and demonstrates that, in early times, the art was not so far improved as to enable men to undertake distant voyages, or to attempt remote discoveries.

As soon, however, as the art of navigation became known, a new species of correspondence among men took place. It is from this æra, that we must date the commencement of such an intercourse between nations as deserves the appellation of commerce. Men are, indeed, far advanced in improvement before commerce becomes an object of great importance to them. They must even have made some considerable progress towards civilization, before they acquire the idea of property, and ascertain it so perfectly as to be acquainted with the most simple of all contracts, that of exchanging by barter one rude commodity for another. But as soon as this important right is established, and every individual feels that he has an exclusive title to possess or to alienate whatever he has acquired by his own labour or dexterity, the wants and ingenuity of his nature suggest to him a new me-

thod of increasing his acquisitions and enjoyments, by disposing of what is superfluous in his own stores, in order to procure what is necessary or desirable in those of other men. Thus a commercial intercourse begins, and is carried on among the members of the same community. By degrees, they discover that neighbouring tribes possess what they themselves want, and enjoy comforts of which they wish to partake. In the same mode, and upon the same principles, that domestic traffic is carried on within the society, an external commerce is established with other tribes or nations. Their mutual interest and mutual wants render this intercourse desirable, and imperceptibly introduce the maxims and laws which facilitate its progress and render it secure. But no very extensive commerce can take place between contiguous provinces, whose soil and climate being nearly the same, yield similar productions. Remote countries cannot convey their commodities by land, to those places, where on account of their rarity they are desired, and become valuable. It is to navigation that men are indebted for the power of transporting the superfluous stock of one part of the earth, to supply the wants of another. The luxuries and blessings of a particular climate are no longer confined to itself alone, but the enjoyment of them is communicated to the most distant regions.

In proportion as the knowledge of the advantages derived from navigation and commerce continued to spread, the intercourse among nations extended. The ambition of conquest, or the necessity of procuring new settlements, were no longer the sole motives of visiting distant lands. The desire of gain became a new incentive to activity, roused adventurers, and sent them forth upon long voyages, in search of countries, whose products or wants might increase that circulation, which nourishes and gives vigour to commerce. Trade proved a great source of discovery,

It opened unknown seas, it penetrated into new regions, and contributed more than any other cause, to bring men acquainted with the situation, the nature, and commodities of the different parts of the globe. But even after a regular commerce was established in the world, after nations were considerably civilized, and the sciences and arts were cultivated with ardour and success, navigation continued to be so imperfect, that it can hardly be said to have advanced beyond the infancy of its improvement in the ancient world.

Among all the nations of antiquity the structure of their vessels was extremely rude, and their method of working them very defective. They were unacquainted with several principles and operations in navigation, which are now considered as the first elements on which that science is founded. Though that property of the magnet, by which it attracts iron, was well known to the ancients, its more important and amazing virtue of pointing to the poles had entirely escaped their observation. Destitute of this faithful guide, which now conducts the pilot with so much certainty in the unbounded ocean, during the darkness of night, or when the heavens are covered with clouds, the ancients had no other method of regulating their course than by observing the sun and stars. Their navigation was of consequence uncertain and timid. They durst seldom quit sight of land, but crept along the coast, exposed to all the dangers, and retarded by all the obstructions, unavoidable in holding such an awkward course. An incredible length of time was requisite for performing voyages, which are now finished in a short space. Even in the mildest climates, and in seas the least tempestuous, it was only during the summer months that the ancients ventured out of their harbours. The remainder of the year was lost in inactivity. It would have been

deemed most inconsiderate rashness to have braved the fury of the winds and waves during winter [a].

While both the science and practice of navigation continued to be so defective, it was an undertaking of no small difficulty and danger to visit any remote region of the earth. Under every disadvantage, however, the active spirit of commerce exerted itself. The Egyptians, soon after the establishment of their monarchy, are said to have opened a trade between the Arabian Gulf or Red Sea, and the western coast of the great Indian continent. The commodities which they imported from the east, were carried by land from the Arabian Gulf to the banks of the Nile, and conveyed down that river to the Mediterranean. But if the Egyptians in early times applied themselves to commerce, their attention to it was of short duration. The fertile soil and mild climate of Egypt produced the necessaries and comforts of life with such profusion, as rendered its inhabitants so independent of other countries, that it became an established maxim among that people, whose ideas and institutions differed in almost every point from those of other nations, to renounce all intercourse with foreigners. In consequence of this, they never went out of their own country; they held all seafaring persons in detestation, as impious and profane; and fortifying their own harbours, they denied strangers admittance into them [b]. It was in the decline of their power, and when their veneration for ancient maxims had greatly abated, that they again opened their ports, and resumed any communication with foreigners.

The character and situation of the Phenicians were as favourable to the spirit of commerce and discovery as those of the Egyptians were adverse to it. They had no distinguishing peculiarity in their manners

[a] Vegetius de Re milit. lib. iv.

[b] Diod. Sicul. lib. i. p. 78. Ed. Wesselingi. Amst. 1756. Strabo, lib. xvii, p. 1142. Ed. Amst. 1707.

and institutions ; they were not addicted to any singular and unsocial form of superstition ; they could mingle with other nations without scruple or reluctance. The territory which they possessed was neither large nor fertile. Commerce was the only source from which they could derive opulence or power. Accordingly, the trade carried on by the Phenicians of Sidon and Tyre, was more extensive and enterprising than that of any state in the ancient world. The genius of the Phenicians, as well as the object of their policy and the spirit of their laws, were entirely commercial. They were a people of merchants who aimed at the empire of the sea, and actually possessed it. Their ships not only frequented all the ports in the Mediterranean, but they were the first who ventured beyond the ancient boundaries of navigation, and passing the Straits of Gades, visited the western coasts of Spain and Africa. In many of the places to which they resorted, they planted colonies, and communicated to the rude inhabitants some knowledge of their arts and improvements. While they extended their discoveries towards the north and the west, they did not neglect to penetrate into the more opulent and fertile regions of the south and east. Having rendered themselves masters of several commodious harbours towards the bottom of the Arabian Gulf, they, after the example of the Egyptians, established a regular intercourse with Arabia and the continent of India on the one hand, and with the eastern coast of Africa on the other. From these countries they imported many valuable commodities, unknown to the rest of the world, and, during a long period, engrossed that lucrative branch of commerce without a rival [c].

The vast wealth which the Phenicians acquired by monopolizing the trade carried on in the Red Sea,

[c] See NOTE I. at the end of the volume.

incited their neighbours the Jews, under the prosperous reigns of David and Solomon, to aim at being admitted to some share of it. This they obtained, partly by their conquest of Idumea, which stretches along the Red Sea, and partly by their alliance with Hiram king of Tyre. Solomon fitted out fleets, which under the direction of Phenician pilots, sailed from the Red Sea to Tarshish and Ophir. These it is probable were ports in India and Africa which their conductors were accustomed to frequent, and from them the Jewish ships returned with such valuable cargoes as suddenly diffused wealth and splendour through the kingdom of Israel [d]. But the singular institutions of the Jews, the observance of which was enjoined by their divine legislator, with an intention of preserving them a separate people, uninfected by idolatry, formed a national character incapable of that open and liberal intercourse with strangers which commerce requires. Accordingly, this unsocial genius of the people, together with the disasters which befel the kingdom of Israel, prevented the commercial spirit which their monarchs laboured to introduce, and to cherish, from spreading among them. The Jews can, not be numbered among the nations which contributed to improve navigation, or to extend discovery,

But though the instructions and example of the Phenicians were unable to mould the manners and temper of the Jews, in opposition to the tendency of their laws, they transmitted the commercial spirit with facility, and in full vigour, to their own descendants the Carthaginians. The commonwealth of Carthage applied to trade and to naval affairs, with no less ardour, ingenuity, and success, than its parent state. Carthage early rivalled, and soon surpassed Tyre, in opulence and power, but seems not to have

[d] Memoire sur le Pays d'Ophir par M. D'Anville, Mem. de l'Academ. des Inscript. &c. tom. xxx. 83,

aimed at obtaining any share in the commerce with India. The Phenicians had engrossed this, and had such a command of the Red Sea, as secured to them the exclusive possession of that lucrative branch of trade. The commercial activity of the Carthaginians was exerted in another direction.—Without contending for the trade of the east with their mother-country, they extended their navigation chiefly towards the west and north. Following the course which the Phenicians had opened, they passed the Straits of Gades, and pushing their discoveries far beyond those of the parent state, visited not only all the coasts of Spain, but those of Gaul, and penetrated at last into Britain. At the same time that they acquired knowledge of new countries in this part of the globe, they gradually carried their researches towards the south. They made considerable progress, by land, into the interior provinces of Africa, traded with some of them, and subjected others to their empire. They sailed along the western coast of that great continent, almost to the Tropic of Cancer, and planted several colonies, in order to civilize the natives, and accustom them to commerce. They discovered the Fortunate Islands, now known by the name of the Canaries, the utmost boundary of ancient navigation in the western ocean [e].

Nor was the progress of the Phenicians and Carthaginians in their knowledge of the globe, owing entirely to the desire of extending their trade from one country to another. Commerce was followed by its usual effects among both these people. It awakened curiosity, enlarged the ideas and desires of men, and incited them to bold enterprizes. Voyages were undertaken, the sole object of which was to discover new countries, and to explore unknown seas. Such, during the prosperous age of the Carthaginian republic,

[e] Plinii Nat. Hist. lib. vi. cap. 37. edit. in usum Delph. 4to. 1685.

were the famous navigations of Hanno and Himilco. Both their fleets were equipped by authority of the senate, and at public expence. Hanno was directed to steer towards the south, along the coast of Africa, and he seems to have advanced much nearer the equinoctial line than any former navigator [*f*]. Himilco had it in charge to proceed towards the north, and to examine the western coasts of the European continent [*g*]. Of the same nature was the extraordinary navigation of the Phenicians round Africa. A Phenician fleet, we are told, fitted out by Necho king of Egypt, took its departure about six hundred and four years before the Christian æra, from a port in the Red Sea, doubled the southern promontory of Africa, and, after a voyage of three years, returned by the Straits of Gades, to the mouth of the Nile [*h*]. Endoxus of Cyzicus is said to have held the same course, and to have accomplished the same arduous undertaking [*i*].

These voyages, if performed in the manner which I have related, may justly be reckoned the greatest effort of navigation in the ancient world; and if we attend to the imperfect state of the art at that time, it is difficult to determine, whether we should most admire the courage and sagacity with which the design was formed, or the conduct and good fortune with which it was executed. But unfortunately, all the original and authentic accounts of the Phenician and Carthaginian voyages, whether undertaken by public authority, or in prosecution of their private trade, have perished. The information which we receive concerning them from the Greek

[*f*] Plinii Nat. Hist. lib. v. c. 1. Hannonis Periplus ap. Geograph. minores, edit. Hudsoni, vol. i. p. 1.

[*g*] Plinii Nat. Hist. lib. ii. c. 67. Festus Avienus apud Bochart. Geogr. Sacr. lib. i. c. 60. p. 652. Oper vol. iii. L. Bat. 1707.

[*h*] Herodot. lib. iv. c. 42.

[*i*] Plinii Nat. Hist. lib. ii. c. 67.



and Roman authors, is not only obscure and inaccurate, but, if we except a short narrative of Hanno's expedition, is of suspicious authority [*k*]. Whatever acquaintance with the remote regions of the earth the Phenicians or Carthaginians may have acquired, was concealed from the rest of mankind with a mercantile jealousy. Every thing relative to the course of their navigation was not only a mystery of trade, but a secret of state. Extraordinary facts are recorded concerning their solicitude to prevent other nations from penetrating into what they wished should remain undivulged [*l*]. Many of their discoveries seem, accordingly, to have been scarcely known beyond the precincts of their own state. The navigation round Africa, in particular, is recorded by the Greek and Roman writers, rather as a strange amusing tale, which they did not comprehend, or did not believe, than as a real transaction, which enlarged their knowledge and influenced their opinions [*m*]. As neither the progress of the Phenician or Carthaginian discoveries, nor the extent of their navigation, were communicated to the rest of mankind, all memorials of their extraordinary skill in naval affairs seem, in a great measure, to have perished, when the maritime power of the former was annihilated by Alexander's conquest of Tyre, and the empire of the latter was overturned by the Roman arms.

Leaving then the obscure and pompous account of the Phenician and Carthaginian voyages to the curiosity and conjectures of antiquaries, history must rest satisfied with relating the progress of navigation and discovery among the Greeks and Romans, which, though less splendid, is better ascertained. It is evident that the Phenicians, who instructed the Greeks in many other useful sciences and arts, did not com,

[*k*] See NOTE II.

[*l*] Strab. Geogr. lib. iii. p. 265 lib. xviii. p. 1154.

[*m*] See NOTE III.

communicate to them that extensive knowledge of navigation which they themselves possessed ; nor did the Romans imbibe that commercial spirit and ardour for discovery which distinguished their rivals the Carthaginians. Though Greece be almost encompassed by the sea, which formed many spacious bays and commodious harbours, though it be surrounded by a great number of fertile islands, yet, notwithstanding such a favourable situation, which seemed to invite that ingenious people to apply themselves to navigation, it was long before this art attained any degree of perfection among them. Their early voyages, the object of which was piracy rather than commerce, were so inconsiderable, that the expedition of the Argonauts from the coast of Thessaly to the Euxine sea, appeared such an amazing effort of skill and courage, as entitled the conductors of it to be ranked among the demigods, and exalted the vessel in which they sailed to a place among the heavenly constellations. Even at a later period, when the Greeks engaged in their famous enterprise against Troy, their knowledge in naval affairs seems not to have been much improved. According to the account of Homer, the only poet to whom history ventures to appeal, and who, by his scrupulous accuracy in describing the manners and arts of early ages, merits this distinction, the science of navigation, at that time, had hardly advanced beyond its rudest state. The Greeks in the heroic age seem to have been unacquainted with the use of iron the most serviceable of all the metals, without which no considerable progress was ever made in the mechanical arts. Their vessels were of inconsiderable burthen, and mostly without decks. They had only one mast, which was erected or taken down at pleasure. They were strangers to the use of anchors. All their operations in sailing were clumsy and unskilful. They turned their observation towards stars, which were improper for regulating their course, and their mode of observing them

was inaccurate and fallacious. When they had finished a voyage they drew their paltry barks ashore, as savages do their canoes, and these remained on dry land until the season of returning to sea approached. It is not then in the early or heroic ages of Greece that we can expect to observe the science of navigation, and the spirit of discovery, making any considerable progress. During that period of disorder and ignorance, a thousand causes concurred in restraining curiosity and enterprize within very narrow bounds.

But the Greeks advanced with rapidity to a state of greater civilization and refinement. Government, in its most liberal and perfect form, began to be established in their different communities; equal laws and regular police were gradually introduced; the sciences and arts which are useful or ornamental in life were carried to a high pitch of improvement, and several of the Grecian commonwealths applied to commerce with such ardour and success, that they were considered, in the ancient world, as maritime powers of the first rank. Even then, however, the naval victories of the Greeks must be ascribed rather to the native spirit of the people, and to that courage which the enjoyment of liberty inspires, than to any extraordinary progress in the science of navigation. In the Persian war, those exploits which the genius of the Greek historians has rendered so famous, were performed by fleets, composed chiefly of small vessels without decks [n]; the crews of which rushed forward with impetuous valour, but little art, to board those of the enemy. In the war of Peloponnesus, their ships seem still to have been of inconsiderable burthen and force. The extent of their trade, how highly soever it may have been estimated in ancient times, was in proportion to this low condition of their marine. The maritime states of Greece hardly carried on any commerce beyond the limits of the Medi-

[n] Thucyd. lib. i. c. 14.

terranean sea. Their chief intercourse was with the colonies of their countrymen, planted in the lesser Asia, in Italy and Sicily. They sometimes visited the ports of Egypt, of the southern provinces of Gaul, and of Thrace; or, passing through the Hellespont, they traded with the countries situated around the Euxine sea. Amazing instances occur of their ignorance even of those countries which lay within the narrow precincts to which their navigation was confined. When the Greeks had assembled their combined fleet against Xerxes at Egina, they thought it unadvisable to sail to Samos, because they believed the distance between that island and Egina to be as great as the distance between Egina and the Pillars of Hercules [o]. They were either utterly unacquainted with all the parts of the globe beyond the Mediterranean sea, or what knowledge they had of them was founded on conjecture, or derived from the information of a few persons, whom curiosity and the love of science had prompted to travel into Upper Asia, or by sea into Egypt, the ancient seats of wisdom and arts. After all that the Greeks learned from them, they appear to have been ignorant of the most important facts on which an accurate and scientific knowledge of the globe is founded.

The expedition of Alexander the Great into the east, considerably enlarged the sphere of navigation and of geographical knowledge among the Greeks. That extraordinary man, notwithstanding the violent passions which incited him, at some times, to the wildest actions, and the most extravagant enterprises, possessed talents which fitted him not only to conquer, but to govern the world. He was capable of framing those bold and original schemes of policy, which gave a new form to human affairs. The revolution in commerce, brought about by the force of his genius, is hardly inferior to that revolution in empire occasioned

[o] Herodot. lib. viii. c. 132.

by the success of his arms. It is probable, that the opposition and efforts of the republic of Tyre, which checked him so long in the career of his victories, gave Alexander an opportunity of observing the vast resources of a maritime power, and conveyed to him some idea of the immense wealth which the Tyrians derived from their commerce, especially that with the East Indies. As soon as he had accomplished the destruction of Tyre, and reduced Egypt to subjection, he formed the plan of rendering the empire which he proposed to establish, the centre of commerce as well as the seat of dominion. With this view he founded a great city, which he honoured with his own name, near one of the mouths of the river Nile, that, by the Mediterranean sea, and the neighbourhood of the Arabian Gulf, it might command the trade both of the east and west [*p*]. This situation was chosen with such discernment, that Alexandria soon became the chief commercial city in the world. Not only during the subsistence of the Grecian empire in Egypt and in the east, but amidst all the successive revolutions in those countries, from the time of the Ptolemies to the discovery of the navigation by the Cape of Good Hope, commerce, particularly that of the East Indies, continued to flow in the channel which the sagacity and foresight of Alexander had marked out for it.

His ambition was not satisfied with having opened to the Greeks a communication with India by sea ; he aspired to the sovereignty of those regions which furnished the rest of mankind with so many precious commodities, and conducted his army thither by land. Enterprising, however, as he was, he may be said rather to have viewed, than to have conquered that country. He did not, in his progress towards the east, advance beyond the banks of the rivers that fall into the Indus, which is now the western boundary of the vast continent of India. Amidst the wild ex-

[*p*] Strab. Geogr. lib. xvii. p. 1143. 1149.

exploits which distinguished this part of his history, he pursued measures that mark the superiority of his genius, as well as the extent of his views. He had penetrated as far into India as to confirm his opinion of its commercial importance, and to perceive that immense wealth might be derived from intercourse with a country, where the arts of elegance having been more early cultivated, were arrived at greater perfection than in any other part of the earth [q]. Full of this idea, he resolved to examine the course of navigation from the mouth of the Indus to the bottom of the Persian Gulf; and if it should be found practicable, to establish a regular communication between them. In order to effect this, he proposed to remove the cataracts, with which, the jealousy of the Persians, and their aversion to correspondence with foreigners, had obstructed the entrance into the Euphrates [r]; to carry the commodities of the east up that river, and the Tigris, which unites with it, into the interior parts of his Asiatic dominions; while, by the way of the Arabian Gulf, and the river Nile, they might be conveyed to Alexandria, and distributed to the rest of the world. Nearchus, an officer of eminent abilities, was entrusted with the command of the fleet fitted out for this expedition. He performed this voyage, which was deemed an enterprise so arduous and important, that Alexander reckoned it one of the most extraordinary events which distinguished his reign. Inconsiderable as it may now appear, it was, at that time, an undertaking of no little merit and difficulty. In the prosecution of it, striking instances occur of the small progress which the Greeks had made in naval knowledge [s]. Having never sailed beyond the bounds of the Mediterranean, where the ebb and flow of the sea are hardly perceptible, when they first observed this phænomenon

[q] Strab. Geogr. lib. xv. p. 1036. Q. Curtius, lib. xviii. c. 9.

[r] Strab. Geogr. lib. xvi. p. 1075. [s] See NOTE IV.

at the mouth of the Indus, it appeared to them a prodigy by which the gods testified the displeasure of Heaven against their enterprise [1]. During their whole course, they seem never to have lost sight of land, but followed the bearings of the coast so servilely, that they could not much avail themselves of those periodical winds which facilitate navigation in the Indian ocean. Accordingly, they spent no less than ten [u] months in performing this voyage, which, from the mouth of the Indus to that of the Persian Gulf, does not exceed twenty degrees. It is probable, that amidst the violent convulsions and frequent revolutions in the east, occasioned by the contests among the successors of Alexander, the navigation to India, by the course which Nearchus had opened, was discontinued. The Indian trade carried on at Alexandria not only subsisted, but was so much extended under the Grecian monarchs of Egypt, that it proved a great source of the wealth which distinguished their kingdom.

The progress which the Romans made in navigation and discovery, was still more inconsiderable than that of the Greeks. The genius of the Roman people, their military education, and the spirit of their laws, concurred in estranging them from commerce and naval affairs. It was the necessity of opposing a formidable rival, not the desire of extending trade, which first prompted them to aim at maritime power. Though they soon perceived that, in order to acquire the universal dominion after which they aspired, it was necessary to render themselves masters of the sea, they still considered the naval service as a subordinate station, and reserved for it such citizens as were not of a rank to be admitted into the legions [x]. In the history of the Roman republic, hardly one event occurs, that marks attention

[1] See NOTE V.

[u] Plin. Hist. Nat. lib. vi. c. 23.

[x] Polyb. lib. v.



to navigation any farther than as it was instrumental towards conquest. When the Roman valour and discipline had subdued all the maritime states known in the ancient world; when Carthage, Greece, and Egypt had submitted to their power, the Romans did not imbibe the commercial spirit of the conquered nations. Among that people of soldiers, to have applied to trade would have been deemed a degradation of a Roman citizen. They abandoned the mechanical arts, commerce, and navigation, to slaves, to freedmen, to provincials, and to citizens of the lowest class. Even after the subversion of liberty, when the severity and haughtiness of ancient manners began to abate, commerce did not rise into high estimation among the Romans. The trade of Greece, Egypt, and the other conquered countries, continued to be carried on in its usual channels, after they were reduced into the form of Roman provinces. As Rome was the capital of the world, and the seat of government, all the wealth, and valuable productions of the provinces flowed naturally thither. The Romans, satisfied with this, seem to have suffered commerce to remain almost entirely in the hands of the natives of the respective countries. The extent, however, of the Roman power, which reached over the greatest part of the known world, the vigilant inspection of the Roman magistrates, and the spirit of the Roman government, no less intelligent than active, gave such additional security to commerce, as animated it with new vigour. The union among nations was never so entire, nor the intercourse so perfect, as within the bounds of this vast empire. Commerce, under the Roman dominion, was not obstructed by the jealousy of rival states, interrupted by frequent hostilities, or limited by partial restrictions. One superintending power moved and regulated the industry of mankind, and enjoyed the fruits of their joint efforts.



Navigation felt this influence, and improved under it. As soon as the Romans acquired a taste for the luxuries of the east, the trade with India through Egypt was pushed with new vigour, and carried on to greater extent. By frequenting the Indian continent, navigators became acquainted with the periodical course of the winds, which, in the ocean that separates Africa from India, blow with little variation during one half of the year from the east, and during the other half blow with equal steadiness from the west. Encouraged by observing this, the pilot who sailed from Egypt to India abandoned their ancient slow and dangerous course along the coast, and as soon as the western monsoon set in, took their departure from Ocelis, at the mouth of the Arabian Gulf, and stretched boldly across the ocean [y]. The uniform direction of the wind supplying the place of the compass, and rendering the guidance of the star less necessary, conducted them to the port of Musiris, on the western shore of the Indian continent. There they took on board their cargo, and returned with the eastern monsoon, finished their voyage the Arabian Gulf within the year. This part of India, now known by the name of the Malabar coast, seems to have been the utmost limit of ancient navigation in that quarter of the globe. What imperfect knowledge the ancients had of the immense countries which stretch beyond this towards the east, they received from a few adventurers, who had visited them by land. Such excursions were not frequent nor extensive, and it is probable, that the Roman intercourse with India subsisted, no traveller ever penetrated farther than to the banks of the Ganges [z]. The fleets from Egypt which departed at Musiris were loaded, it is true, with spices and other rich commodities of the continent.

[y] Plin. Nat. Hist. lib. vi. c. 23.

[z] Strab. Geogr. lib. xv. p. 1006, 1010. See No

islands of the farther India; but these were brought to that port, which became the staple of the commerce between the East and West, by the Indians themselves, in canoes hollowed out of one tree [a]. The Egyptian and Roman merchants, satisfied with acquiring those commodities in this manner, did not think it necessary to explore unknown seas, and venture upon a dangerous navigation in quest of the countries which produced them. But though the discoveries of the Romans in India were so limited, their commerce there was such as will appear considerable, even to the present age, in which the Indian trade has been extended far beyond the practice or conception of any preceding period. We are informed by one author of credit [b], that the commerce with India drained the Roman empire every year of more than four hundred thousand pounds; and by another, that one hundred and twenty ships sailed annually from the Arabian Gulf to that country [c].

The discovery of this new method of sailing to India, is the most considerable improvement in navigation made during the continuance of the Roman power. But in ancient times, the knowledge of remote countries was acquired more frequently by land than by sea [d]; and the Romans, from their peculiar disinclination to naval affairs, may be said to have neglected totally the latter, though a more easy and expeditious method of discovery. The progress, however, of their victorious armies through a considerable portion of Europe, Asia, and Africa, contributed greatly to extend discovery by land, and gradually opened the navigation of new and unknown seas. Previous to the Roman conquests, the civilized nations of antiquity had little communica-

[a] Plin. Nat. Hist. lib. vi. c. 26.

[b] Plin. Nat. Hist. lib. vi. c. 26.

[c] Strab. Geogr. lib. ii. p. 179.

[d] See NOTE VII.

tion with those countries in Europe, which now form its most opulent and powerful kingdoms. The interior parts of Spain and Gaul were imperfectly known. Britain, separated from the rest of the world, had never been visited, except by its neighbours the Gauls, and by a few Carthaginian merchants. The name of Germany had scarcely been heard of. Into all these countries the arms of the Romans penetrated. They entirely subdued Spain and Gaul; they conquered the greatest and most fertile parts of Britain; they advanced into Germany, as far as the banks of the river Elbe. In Africa, they acquired a considerable knowledge of the provinces which stretch along the Mediterranean sea, from Egypt westward to the Straits of Gades. In Asia, they not only subjected to their power most of the provinces which composed the Persian and Macedonian empires, but, after their victories over Mithridates and Tigranes, they seem to have made a more accurate survey of the countries contiguous to the Euxine and Caspian seas, and to have carried on a more extensive trade than that of the Greeks with the opulent and commercial nations, then seated round the Euxine sea.

From this succinct survey of discovery and navigation, which I have traced from the earliest dawn of historical knowledge to the full establishment of the Roman dominion, the progress of both appears to have been wonderfully slow. It seems neither adequate to what we might have expected from the activity and enterprize of the human mind, nor to what might have been performed by the power of the great empires which successively governed the world. If we reject accounts that are fabulous and obscure; if we adhere steadily to the light and information of authentic history, without substituting in its place the conjectures of fancy, or the dreams of etymologists, we must conclude, that the know-

ledge which the ancients had acquired of the habitable globe was extremely confined. In Europe, the extensive provinces in the eastern part of Germany were little known to them. They were almost totally unacquainted with the vast countries which are now subject to the kings of Denmark, Sweden, Prussia, Poland, and the Russian empire. The more barren regions, that stretch within the arctic circle, were quite unexplored. In Africa, their researches did not extend far beyond the provinces which border on the Mediterranean, and those situated on the western shore of the Arabian Gulf. In Asia, they were unacquainted, as I formerly observed, with all the fertile and opulent countries beyond the Ganges, which furnish the most valuable commodities that, in modern times, have been the great object of the European commerce with India; nor do they seem to have ever penetrated into those immense regions occupied by the wandering tribes, which they called by the general name of Sarmatians or Scythians, and which are now possessed by Tartars of various denominations, and by the Asiatic subjects of Russia.

But there is one opinion, that universally prevailed among the ancients, which conveys a more striking idea of the small progress they had made in the knowledge of the habitable globe, than can be derived from any detail of their discoveries. They supposed the earth to be divided into five regions, which they distinguished by the name of zones. Two of these, which were nearest the poles, they termed frigid zones, and believed that the extreme cold which reigned perpetually there, rendered them uninhabitable. Another, seated under the line, and extending on either side towards the tropics, they called the torrid zone, and imagined it to be so burnt-up with unremitting heat, as to be equally destitute of inhabitants. On the two other zones,

which occupied the remainder of the earth, they bestowed the appellation of temperate, and taught that these, being the only regions in which life could subsist, were allotted to man for his habitation. This wild opinion was not a conceit of the uninformed vulgar, or a fanciful fiction of the poets; but a system adopted by the most enlightened philosophers, the most accurate historians and geographers in Greece and Rome. According to this theory, a vast portion of the habitable earth was pronounced to be unfit for sustaining the human species. Those fertile and populous regions within the torrid zone, which are now known not only to yield their own inhabitants the necessaries and comforts of life with most luxuriant profusion, but to communicate their superfluous stores to the rest of the world, were supposed to be the mansion of perpetual sterility and desolation. As all the parts of the globe with which the ancients were acquainted, lay within the northern temperate zone, their opinion that the other temperate zone was filled with inhabitants, was founded on reasoning and conjecture, not on discovery. They even believed that, by the intolerable heat of the torrid zone, such an insuperable barrier was placed between the two temperate regions of the earth, as would prevent for ever any intercourse between their respective inhabitants. Thus this extravagant theory not only proves that the ancients were unacquainted with the true state of the globe, but it tended to render their ignorance perpetual, by representing all attempts towards opening a communication with the remote regions of the earth, as utterly impracticable [f].

But, however imperfect or inaccurate the geographical knowledge which the Greeks and Romans had acquired may appear, in respect of the present improved state of that science, their progress in dis-

[f] See NOTE VIII.

covery will seem considerable, and the extent to which they carried navigation and commerce must be reckoned great, when compared with the ignorance of early times. As long as the Roman empire retained such vigour as to preserve its authority over the conquered nations, and to keep them united, it was an object of public police, as well as of private curiosity, to examine and describe the countries which composed this great body. Even when the other sciences began to decline, geography, enriched with new observations, and receiving some accession from the experience of every age, and the reports of every traveller, continued to improve. It attained to the highest point of perfection and accuracy to which it ever arrived in the ancient world, by the industry and genius of Ptolemy the philosopher. He flourished in the second century of the Christian æra, and published a description of the terrestrial globe, more ample and exact than that of any of his predecessors.

But, soon after, violent convulsions began to shake the Roman state; the fatal ambition or caprice of Constantine, by changing the seat of government, divided and weakened its force; the barbarous nations, which Providence prepared as instruments to overturn the mighty fabric of the Roman power, began to assemble and to muster their armies on its frontier; the empire tottered to its fall. During this decline and old age of the Roman state, it was impossible that the sciences should go on improving. The efforts of genius were, at that period, as languid and feeble as those of government. From the time of Ptolemy, no considerable addition seems to have been made to geographical knowledge, nor did any important revolution happen in trade, excepting that Constantinople, by its advantageous situation, and the encouragement of the eastern emperors, became a commercial city of the first note.

At length, the clouds which had been so long gathering round the Roman empire, burst into a storm. Barbarous nations rushed in from several quarters with irresistible impetuosity, and, in the general wreck, occasioned by the inundation which overwhelmed Europe, the arts, sciences, inventions, and discoveries of the Romans, perished in a great measure, and disappeared [g]. All the various tribes, which settled in the different provinces of the Roman empire, were uncivilized, strangers to letters, destitute of arts, unacquainted with regular government, subordination, or laws. The manners and institutions of some of them were so rude, as to be hardly compatible with a state of social union. Europe, when occupied by such inhabitants, may be said to have returned to a second infancy, and had to begin anew its career in improvement, science, and civility. The first effect of the settlement of those barbarous invaders was to dissolve the union by which the Roman power had cemented mankind together. They parcelled out Europe into many small and independent states, differing from each other in language and customs. No intercourse subsisted between the members of those divided and hostile communities. Accustomed to a simple mode of life, and averse to industry, they had few wants to supply, and few superfluities to dispose of. The names of *stranger* and of *enemy* became once more words of the same import. Customs every where prevailed, and even laws were established, which rendered it disagreeable and dangerous to visit any foreign country [h]. Cities, in which alone an extensive commerce can be carried on were few, inconsiderable, and destitute of those immunities which produce security or excite enterprise. The sciences, on which geography and navigation are founded,

[g] Hist. of Charles V. vol. i. p. 19. 84.

[h] Hist. of Charles V. vol. i. p. 84. 321.

were little cultivated. The accounts of ancient improvements and discoveries, contained in the Greek and Roman authors, were neglected or misunderstood. The knowledge of remote regions was lost, their situation, their commodities, and almost their names, were unknown.

One circumstance prevented commercial intercourse with distant nations from ceasing altogether. Constantinople, though often threatened by the fierce invaders, who spread desolation over the rest of Europe, was so fortunate as to escape their destructive rage. In that city, the knowledge of ancient arts and discoveries was preserved; a taste for splendour and elegance subsisted; the productions and luxuries of foreign countries were in request; and commerce continued to flourish there, when it was almost extinct in every other part of Europe. The citizens of Constantinople did not confine their trade to the islands of the Archipelago, or to the adjacent coasts of Asia; they took a wider range, and following the course which the ancients had marked out, imported the commodities of the East Indies from Alexandria. When Egypt was torn from the Roman empire by the Arabians, the industry of the Greeks discovered a new channel, by which the productions of India might be conveyed to Constantinople. They were carried up the Indus, as far as that great river is navigable; thence they were transported by land to the banks of the river Oxus, and proceeded down its stream to the Caspian sea. There they entered the Volga, and sailing up it, were carried by land to the Tanais, which conducted them into the Euxine sea, where vessels from Constantinople waited their arrival [*i*]. This extraordinary and tedious mode of conveyance merits attention, not only as a proof of the violent passion which the inhabitants of Constantinople had con-

[*i*] Ramusio, vol. i. p. 372, F.



ceived for the luxuries of the east, and as a specimen of the ardour and ingenuity with which they carried on commerce; but because it demonstrates, that, during the ignorance which reigned in the rest of Europe, an extensive knowledge of remote countries was still preserved in the capital of the Greek empire.

At the same time, a gleam of light and knowledge broke in upon the east. The Arabians having contracted some relish for the sciences of the people, whose empire they had contributed to overturn, translated the books of several of the Greek philosophers into their own language. One of the first was that valuable work of Ptolemy, which I have already mentioned. The study of geography became, of consequence, an early object of attention to the Arabians. But that acute and ingenious people cultivated chiefly the speculative and scientific parts of geography. In order to ascertain the figure and dimensions of the terrestrial globe, they applied the principles of geometry, they had recourse to astronomical observations, they employed experiments and operations, which, Europe, in more enlightened times, has been proud to adopt and to imitate. At that period, however, the fame of the improvements made by the Arabians did not reach Europe. The knowledge of their discoveries was reserved for ages capable of comprehending and of perfecting them.

By degrees, the calamities and desolation brought upon the western provinces of the Roman empire by its barbarous conquerors, were forgotten, and in some measure repaired. The rude tribes which settled there acquiring insensibly some idea of regular government, and some relish for the functions and comforts of civil life, Europe began to awake from its torpid and unactive state. The first symptoms of revival were discerned in Italy. The

northern tribes, which took possession of this country, made progress in improvement with greater rapidity than the people settled in other parts of Europe. Various causes, which it is not the object of this work to enumerate or explain, concurred in restoring liberty and independence to the cities of Italy [*k*]. The acquisition of these roused industry, and gave motion and vigour to all the active powers of the human mind. Foreign commerce revived, navigation was attended to and improved. Constantinople became the chief mart to which the Italians resorted. There they not only met with a favourable reception, but obtained such mercantile privileges as enabled them to carry on trade with great advantage. They were supplied both with the precious commodities of the east, and with many curious manufactures, the product of ancient arts and ingenuity, which still subsisted among the Greeks. As the labour and expence of conveying the productions of India to Constantinople, by that long and indirect course which I have described, rendered them extremely rare, and of an exorbitant price, the industry of the Italians discovered other methods of procuring them in greater abundance, and at an easier rate. They sometimes purchased them in Aleppo, Tripoli, and other ports on the coast of Syria, to which they were brought by a route not unknown to the ancients. They were conveyed from India by sea, up the Persian Gulf, and ascending the Euphrates and Tigris, as far as Bagdat, were carried by land across the desert of Palmyra, and from thence to the towns on the Mediterranean. But from the length of the journey, and the dangers to which the caravans were exposed, this proved always a tedious, and often a precarious mode of conveyance. At length, the Soldans of Egypt, having revived the commerce with India in

[*k*] Hist. of Charles V. vol. i. p. 33.

its ancient channel, by the Arabian Gulf, the Italian merchants, notwithstanding the violent antipathy to each other with which Christians and the followers of Mahomet were then possessed, repaired to Alexandria, and enduring, from the love of gain, the insolence and exactions of the Mahometans, established a lucrative trade in that port. From that period the commercial spirit of Italy became active and enterprising. Venice, Genoa, Pisa, rose from inconsiderable towns, to be populous and wealthy cities. Their naval power increased; their vessels frequented not only all the ports in the Mediterranean, but venturing sometimes beyond the Straits, visited the maritime towns of Spain, France, the Low Countries, and England; and, by distributing their commodities over Europe, began to communicate to its various nations some taste for the valuable productions of the east, as well as some ideas of manufactures and art, which were then unknown beyond the precincts of Italy.

While the cities of Italy were thus advancing in their career of improvement, an event happened, the most extraordinary perhaps in the history of mankind, which, instead of retarding the commercial progress of the Italians, rendered it more rapid. The martial spirit of the Europeans, heightened and inflamed by religious zeal, prompted them to attempt the deliverance of the Holy Land from the dominion of infidels. Vast armies, composed of all the nations in Europe, marched towards Asia, upon this wild enterprize. The Genoese, the Pisans, and Venetians, furnished the transports which carried them thither. They supplied them with provisions and military stores. Beside the immense sums which they received on this account, they obtained commercial privileges, and establishments of great consequence in the settlements which the crusaders made in Palestine, and in other provinces of Asia.

From those sources, prodigious wealth flowed into the cities which I have mentioned. This was accompanied with a proportional increase of power, and, by the end of the holy war, Venice, in particular, became a great maritime state, possessing an extensive commerce, and ample territories [l]. Italy was not the only country in which the crusades contributed to revive and diffuse such a spirit as prepared Europe for future discoveries. By their expeditions into Asia, the other European nations became well acquainted with remote regions, which formerly they knew only by name, or by the reports of ignorant and credulous pilgrims. They had an opportunity of observing the manners, the arts, and the accommodations of people more polished than themselves. This intercourse between the east and west subsisted almost two centuries. The adventurers, who returned from Asia, communicated to their countrymen the ideas which they had acquired, and the habits of life they had contracted, by visiting more refined nations. The Europeans began to be sensible of wants with which they were formerly unacquainted: new desires were excited; and such a taste for the commodities and arts of other countries gradually spread among them, that they not only encouraged the resort of foreigners to their harbours, but began to perceive the advantage and necessity of applying to commerce themselves [m].

This communication, which was opened between Europe and the western provinces of Asia, encouraged several persons to advance far beyond the countries in which the crusaders carried on their operations, and to travel by land into the more remote and opulent regions of the east. The wild fanaticism, which seems at that period to have mingled in all the schemes of individuals, no less than in all

[l] *Essai de l'Histoire du Commerce de Venise*, p. 52, &c.

[m] *Hist. Charles V.* vol. i. p. 31, &c.

the counsels of nations, first incited men to enter upon those long and dangerous peregrinations. They were afterwards undertaken from prospects of commercial advantage, or from motives of mere curiosity. Benjamin, a Jew of Tudela, in the kingdom of Navarre, possessed with a superstitious veneration for the law of Moses, and solicitous to visit his countrymen in the east, whom he hoped to find in such a state of power and opulence as might redound to the honour of his sect, set out from Spain in the year 1160, and travelling by land to Constantinople, proceeded through the countries to the north of the Euxine and Caspian seas, as far as Chinese Tartary. From thence he took his route towards the south, and after traversing various provinces of the farther India, he embarked on the Indian ocean, visited several of its islands, and returned at the end of thirteen years, by the way of Egypt, to Europe, with much information concerning a large district of the globe, altogether unknown at that time to the western world [*n*]. The zeal of the head of the Christian church co-operated with the superstition of Benjamin the Jew, in discovering the interior and remote provinces of Asia. All Christendom having been alarmed with accounts of the rapid progress of the Tartar arms under Zengis Khan, Innocent IV. who entertained most exalted ideas concerning the plenitude of his own power, and the submission due to his injunctions, sent father John de Plano Carpini, at the head of a mission of Franciscan monks, and father Ascolino, at the head of another of Dominicans, to enjoin Kayuk Khan, the grandson of Zengis, who was then at the head of the Tartar empire, to embrace the Christian faith, and to desist from desolating the earth by his arms. The haughty descendant of the greatest conqueror Asia had ever beheld, astonished at this strange mandate from an Italian

[*n*] Bergeron *Recueil des Voyages*, &c. tom. i. p. 1.

priest, whose name and jurisdiction were alike unknown to him, received it with the contempt which it merited, though he dismissed the mendicants who delivered it with impunity. But, as they had penetrated into the country by different routs, and followed for some time the Tartar camps, which were always in motion, they had opportunity of visiting a great part of Asia. Carpini, who proceeded by the way of Poland and Russia, travelled through its northern provinces as far as the extremities of Thibet. Ascolino, who seems to have landed somewhere in Syria, advanced through its southern provinces, into the interior parts of Persia [o].

Not long after (1253), St. Louis of France contributed farther towards extending the knowledge which the Europeans had begun to acquire of those distant regions. Some designing impostor, who took advantage of the slender acquaintance of Christendom with the state and character of the Asiatic nations, having informed him that a powerful khan of the Tartars had embraced the Christian faith, the monarch listened to the tale with pious credulity, and instantly resolved to send ambassadors to this illustrious convert, with a view of inciting him to attack their common enemy the Saracens in one quarter, while he fell upon them in another. As monks were the only persons in that age, who possessed such a degree of knowledge as qualified them for a service of this kind, he employed in it father Andrew, a Jacobine, who was followed by father William de Rubruquis, a Franciscan. With respect to the progress of the former, there is no memorial extant. The journal of the latter has been published. He was admitted into the presence of Mangu, the third khan in succession from Zengis, and made a circuit through the interior parts of Asia, more extensive than that

[o] Hakluyt, i. 21. Bergeron, tom. i,

of any European who had hitherto explored them [*p*].

To those travellers whom religious zeal sent forth to visit Asia, succeeded others who ventured into remote countries, from the prospect of commercial advantage, or from motives of mere curiosity. The first and most eminent of these was Marco Polo, a Venetian of a noble family. Having engaged early in trade (1269), according to the custom of his country, his aspiring mind wished for a sphere of activity more extensive than was afforded to it by the established traffic carried on in those parts of Europe and Asia, which the Venetians frequented. This prompted him to travel into unknown countries, in expectation of opening a commercial intercourse with them, more suited to the sanguine ideas and hopes of a young adventurer.

As his father had already carried some European commodities to the court of the great khan of the Tartars, and had disposed of them to advantage, he resorted thither. Under the protection of Kublay khan, the most powerful of all the successors of Zengis, he continued his mercantile peregrinations in Asia upwards of twenty-six years; and, during that time, advanced towards the east, far beyond the utmost boundaries to which any European traveller had ever proceeded. Instead of following the course of Carpini and Rubruquis, along the vast unpeopled plains of Tartary, he passed through the chief trading cities in the more cultivated parts of Asia, and penetrated to Cambalu, or Pekin, the capital of the great kingdom of Cathay, or China, subject at that time to the successors of Zengis. He made more than one voyage on the Indian ocean, he traded in many of the islands, from which Europe had long received spices and other commodities, which it held in high estimation, though unacquainted with the particular

[*p*] Hakl. i. 71. *Recueil des Voyages par Bergeron*, tom. i.

countries to which it was indebted for those precious productions ; and he obtained information concerning several countries, which he did not visit in person, particularly the island of Zipangi, probably the same now known by the name of Japan [*q*]. On his return, he astonished his contemporaries with his descriptions of vast regions, whose names had never been heard of in Europe, and with such pompous accounts of their fertility, their populousness, their opulence, the variety of their manufactures, and the extent of their trade, as rose far above the conception of an uninformed age.

About half a century after Marco Polo (1322), Sir John Mandeville, an Englishman, encouraged by his example, visited most of the countries in the east which he had described, and, like him, published an account of them [*r*]. The narrations of those early travellers abound with many wild incoherent tales, concerning giants, enchanter, and monsters. But they were not, from that circumstance, less acceptable to an ignorant age, which delighted in what was marvellous. The wonders which they told, mostly on hearsay, filled the multitude with admiration. The facts which they related from their own observation, attracted the attention of the more discerning. The former, which may be considered as the popular traditions and fables of the countries through which they had passed, were gradually disregarded as Europe advanced in knowledge. The latter, however incredible some of them may have appeared in their own time, have been confirmed by the observations of modern travellers. By means of both, however, the curiosity of mankind was excited with respect to the remote parts of the earth, their ideas were enlarged, and they were not only insensibly disposed to attempt new discoveries, but received such informa-

[*q*] *Vigaggi di Marco Polo*. Ramus. ii. 2. Bergeron, tom. ii.

[*r*] *Voyages and Travels*, by Sir John Mandeville.



tion as directed to that particular course in which these were afterwards carried on.

While this spirit was gradually forming in Europe, a fortunate discovery was made, which contributed more than all the efforts and ingenuity of preceding ages, to improve and to extend navigation. That wonderful property of the magnet, by which it communicates such virtue to a needle or slender rod of iron, as to point towards the poles of the earth, was observed. The use which might be made of this in directing navigation was immediately perceived. That valuable, but now familiar instrument, the *mariners compass*, was constructed. When, by means of it, navigators found that, at all seasons, and in every place, they could discover the north and south with so much ease and accuracy, it became no longer necessary to depend merely on the light of the stars and the observation of the sea coast. They gradually abandoned their ancient timid and lingering course along the shore, ventured boldly into the ocean, and relying on this new guide, could steer in the darkest night, and under the most cloudy sky, with a security and precision hitherto unknown. The compass may be said to have opened to man the dominion of the sea, and to have put him in full possession of the earth, by enabling him to visit every part of it. Flavio Gioia, a citizen of Amalfi, a town of considerable trade in the kingdom of Naples, was the author of this great discovery, about the year one thousand three hundred and two. It hath been often the fate of those illustrious benefactors of mankind, who have enriched science and improved the arts by their inventions, to derive more reputation than benefit from the happy efforts of their genius. But the lot of Gioia has been still more cruel: through the inattention or ignorance of contemporary historians, he has been defrauded even of the fame to which he had such a just title. We receive from them no in-

formation with respect to his profession, his character, the precise time when he made this important discovery, or the accidents and inquiries which led to it. The knowledge of this event, though productive of greater effects than any recorded in the annals of the human race, is transmitted to us without any of those circumstances, which can gratify the curiosity that it naturally awakens [s]. But though the use of the compass might enable the Italians to perform the short voyages to which they were accustomed, with greater security and expedition, its influence was not so sudden or extensive, as immediately to render navigation adventurous, and to excite a spirit of discovery. Many causes combined in preventing this beneficial invention from producing its full effect instantaneously. Men relinquish ancient habits slowly, and with reluctance. They are averse to new experiments, and venture upon them with timidity. The commercial jealousy of the Italians, it is probable, laboured to conceal the happy discovery of their countryman from other nations. The art of steering by the compass, with such skill and accuracy as to inspire a full confidence in its direction, was acquired gradually. Sailors, unaccustomed to quit sight of land, durst not launch out at once and commit themselves to unknown seas. Accordingly, near half a century elapsed from the time of Gioia's discovery, before navigators ventured into any seas which they had not been accustomed to frequent.

The first appearance of a bolder spirit may be dated from the voyages of the Spaniards to the Canary or Fortunate Islands. By what accident they were led to the discovery of those small isles, which lie near five hundred miles from the Spanish coast, and above a hundred and fifty miles from the coast of Africa,

[s] Collinas & Trombellus de Acus nauticæ Inventore. Instit. Acad. Bonon. tom. ii. part iii. p. 372.

contemporary writers have not explained. But, about the middle of the fourteenth century, the people of all the different kingdoms into which Spain was then divided, were accustomed to make piratical excursions thither, in order to plunder the inhabitants, or to carry them off as slaves. Clement VI. in virtue of the right claimed by the holy see, to dispose of all countries possessed by infidels, erected those isles into a kingdom, in the year one thousand three hundred and forty-four, and conferred it on Lewis de la Carda, descended from the royal family of Castile. But that unfortunate prince, destitute of power to assert his nominal title, having never visited the Canaries, John de Bethencourt, a Norman baron, obtained a grant of them from Henry III. of Castile [s]. Bethencourt, with the valour and good fortune which distinguished the adventurers of his country, attempted and effected the conquest, and the possession of the Canaries remained for some time in his family, as a fief held of the crown of Castile. Previous to this expedition of Bethencourt, his countrymen settled in Normandy are said to have visited the coast of Africa, and to have proceeded far to the south of the Canary islands (1365). But their voyages thither seem not to have been undertaken in consequence of any public or regular plan for extending navigation and attempting new discoveries. They were either excursions suggested by that roving piratical spirit, which descended to the Normans from their ancestors, or the commercial enterprizes of private merchants, which attracted so little notice, that hardly any memorial of them is to be found in contemporary authors. In a general survey of the progress of discovery, it is sufficient to have mentioned this event; and leaving it among those of dubious existence, or of small importance, we may conclude,

[s] Vieray Clavijo *Notic. de la Histor. de Canaria*, i. 268, &c. *Glas Hist.* c. 1.

that though much additional information concerning the remote regions of the east had been received by travellers who visited them by land, navigation, at the beginning of the fifteenth century, had not advanced beyond the state to which it had attained before the downfall of the Roman empire.

At length the period arrived, when Providence decreed that men were to pass the limits within which they they had been so long confined, and open to themselves a more ample field wherein to display their talents, their enterprize, and courage. The first considerable efforts towards this were not made by any of the more powerful states of Europe, or by those who had applied to navigation with the geatest assiduity and success. The glory of leading the way in this new career was reserved for Portugal, one of the smallest and least powerful of the European kingdoms. As the attempts of the Portuguese to acquire the knowledge of those parts of the globe with which mankind were then unacquainted, not only improved and extended the art of navigation, but roused such a spirit of curiosity and enterprize, as led to the discovery of the New World, of which I propose to write the history, it is necessary to take a full view of the rise, the progress, and success of their various naval operations. It was in this school that the discoverer of America was trained; and unless we trace the steps by which his instructors and guides advanced, it will be impossible to comprehend the circumstances which suggested the idea, or facilitated the execution of his great design.

Various circumstances prompted the Portuguese to exert their activity in this new direction, and enabled them to accomplish undertakings apparently superior to the natural force of their monarchy. The kings of Portugal, having driven the Moors out of their dominions, had acquired power, as well as glory, by the success of their arms against the infidels. By

their victories over them, they had extended the royal authority beyond the narrow limits within which it was originally circumscribed in Portugal, as well as in other feudal kingdoms. They had the command of the national force, could rouse it to act with united vigour, and, after the expulsion of the Moors, could employ it without dread of interruption from any domestic enemy. By the perpetual hostilities carried on for several centuries against the Mahometans, the martial and adventurous spirit which distinguished all the European nations during the middle ages, was improved and heightened among the Portuguese. A fierce civil war towards the close of the fourteenth century, occasioned by a disputed succession, augmented the military ardour of the nation, and formed or called forth men of such active and daring genius, as are fit for bold undertakings. The situation of the kingdom, bounded on every side by the dominions of a more powerful neighbour, did not afford free scope to the activity of the Portuguese by land, as the strength of their monarchy was no match for that of Castile. But Portugal was a maritime state, in which there were many commodious harbours; the people had begun to make some progress in the knowledge and practice of navigation; and the sea was open to them, presenting the only field of enterprize in which they could distinguish themselves.

Such was the state of Portugal, and such the disposition of the people, when John I. surnamed the Bastard, obtained secure possession of the crown by the peace concluded with Castile, in the year one thousand four hundred and eleven. He was a prince of great merit, who, by superior courage and abilities, had opened his way to a throne, which of right did not belong to him. He instantly perceived, that it would be impossible to preserve public order, or domestic tranquillity, without finding some employment

for the restless spirit of his subjects. With this view he assembled a numerous fleet at Lisbon, composed of all the ships which he could fit out in his own kingdom, and of many hired from foreigners. This great armament was destined to attack the Moors settled on the coast of Barbary (1412). While it was equipping, a few vessels were appointed to sail along the western shore of Africa bounded by the Atlantic ocean, and to discover the unknown countries situated there. From this inconsiderable attempt, we may date the commencement of that spirit of discovery, which opened the barriers that had so long shut out mankind from the knowledge of one half of the terrestrial globe.

At that time when John sent forth these ships on this new voyage, the art of navigation was still very imperfect. Though Africa lay so near to Portugal, and the fertility of the countries already known on that continent invited men to explore it more fully, the Portuguese had never ventured to sail beyond *Cape Non*. That promontory, as its name imports, was hitherto considered as a boundary which could not be passed. But the nations of Europe had now acquired as much knowledge, as emboldened them to disregard the prejudices and to correct the errors of their ancestors. The long reign of ignorance, the constant enemy of every curious inquiry, and of every new undertaking, was approaching to its period. The light of science began to dawn. The works of the ancient Greeks and Romans began to be read with admiration and profit. The sciences cultivated by the Arabians were introduced into Europe by the Moors settled in Spain and Portugal, and by the Jews, who were very numerous in both these kingdoms. Geometry, astronomy, and geography, the sciences on which the art of navigation is founded, became objects of studious attention. The memory of the discoveries made by the ancients was revived, and the

progress of their navigation and commerce began to be traced. Some of the causes which have obstructed the cultivation of science in Portugal, during this century and the last, did not exist, or did not operate in the same manner, in the fifteenth century [1]; and the Portuguese, at that period, seem to have kept pace with other nations on this side the Alps in literary pursuits.

As the genius of the age favoured the execution of that new undertaking, to which the peculiar state of the country invited the Portuguese, it proved successful. The vessels sent on the discovery doubled that formidable cape, which had terminated the progress of former navigators, and proceeded a hundred and sixty miles beyond it, to Cape Bojador. As its rocky cliffs, which stretched a considerable way into the Atlantic, appeared more dreadful than the promontory which they had passed, the Portuguese commanders durst not attempt to sail round it, but returned to Lisbon, more satisfied with having advanced so far, than ashamed of having ventured no farther.

Inconsiderable as this voyage was, it increased the passion for discovery, which began to arise in Portugal. The fortunate issue of the king's expedition against the Moors of Barbary (1417), added strength to that spirit in the nation, and pushed it on to new undertakings. In order to render these successful, it was necessary that they should be conducted by a person who possessed abilities capable of discerning what was attainable, who enjoyed leisure to form a regular system for prosecuting discovery, and who was animated with ardour that would persevere in spite of obstacles and repulses. Happily for Portugal, she found all those qualities in Henry duke of Viseo, the fourth son of king John by Philippa of Lancaster, sister of Henry IV. king of England. That prince, in his early youth, having accompanied his father in his

[1] See NOTE IX.



expedition to Barbary, distinguished himself by many deeds of valour. To the martial spirit, which was the characteristic of every man of noble birth at that time, he added all the accomplishments of a more enlightened and polished age. He cultivated the arts and sciences, which were then unknown and despised by persons of his rank. He applied with peculiar fondness to the study of geography; and by the instruction of able masters, as well as by the accounts of travellers, he early acquired such knowledge of the habitable globe, as discovered the great probability of finding new and opulent countries, by sailing along the coast of Africa. Such an object was formed to awaken the enthusiasm and ardour of a youthful mind, and he espoused with the utmost zeal the patronage of a design which might prove as beneficial, as it appeared to be splendid and honourable. In order that he might pursue this great scheme without interruption, he retired from court immediately after his return from Africa, and fixed his residence at Sagres, near Cape St. Vincent, where the prospect of the Atlantic ocean invited his thoughts continually towards his favourite project, and encouraged him to execute it. In this retreat he was attended by some of the most learned men in his country, who aided him in his researches. He applied for information to the Moors of Barbary, who were accustomed to travel by land into the interior provinces of Africa, in quest of ivory, gold-dust, and other rich commodities. He consulted the Jews settled in Portugal. By promises, rewards, and marks of respect, he allured into his service several persons, foreigners as well as Portuguese, who were eminent for their skill in navigation. In taking those preparatory steps, the great abilities of the prince were seconded by his private virtues. His integrity, his affability, his respect for religion, his zeal for the honour of his country, engaged persons of all ranks to applaud his



design, and to favour the execution of it. His schemes were allowed by the greater part of his countrymen to proceed neither from ambition nor the desire of wealth, but to flow from the warm benevolence of a heart eager to promote the happiness of mankind, and which justly entitled him to assume a motto for his device, that described the quality, by which he wished to be distinguished, *the talent of doing good*.

His first effort, as is usual at the commencement of any new undertaking, was extremely inconsiderable. He fitted out a single ship (1418), and giving the command of it to John Gonzalez Zarco and Tristan Vaz, two gentlemen of his household, who voluntarily offered to conduct the enterprize, he instructed them to use their utmost efforts to double Cape Bojador, and thence to steer towards the south. They, according to the mode of navigation which still prevailed, held their course along the shore ; and by following that direction, they must have encountered almost insuperable difficulties in attempting to pass Cape Bojador. But fortune came in aid to their want of skill, and prevented the voyage from being altogether fruitless. A sudden squall of wind arose, drove them out to sea, and when they expected every moment to perish, landed them on an unknown island, which from their happy escape they named *Porto Santo*. In the infancy of navigation, the discovery of this small island appeared a matter of such moment, that they instantly returned to Portugal with the good tidings, and were received by Henry with the applause and honour due to fortunate adventurers. This faint dawn of success filled a mind ardent in the pursuit of a favourite object with such sanguine hopes as were sufficient incitements to proceed. Next year (1419), Henry sent out three ships under the same commanders, to whom he joined Bartholomew Perestrello, in order to take possession of the island which they had discovered. When they

began to settle in Porto Santo, they observed towards the south a fixed spot in the horizon like a small black cloud. By degrees, they were led to conjecture that it might be land, and steering towards it, they arrived at a considerable island, uninhabited and covered with wood, which on that account they called MADEIRA [11]. As it was Henry's chief object to render his discoveries useful to his country, he immediately equipped a fleet to carry a colony of Portuguese to these islands (1420). By his provident care, they were furnished not only with the seeds, plants, and domestic animals common in Europe; but as he foresaw that the warmth of the climate and fertility of the soil would prove favourable to the rearing of other productions, he procured slips of the vine from the island of Cyprus, the rich wines of which were then in great request, and plants of the sugar-cane from Sicily, into which it had been lately introduced. These throve so prosperously in this new country, that the benefit of cultivating them was immediately perceived, and the sugar and wine of Madeira quickly became articles of some consequence in the commerce of Portugal [x].

As soon as the advantages derived from this first settlement to the west of the European continent began to be felt, the spirit of discovery appeared less chimerical, and became more adventurous. By their voyages to Madeira, the Portuguese were gradually accustomed to a bolder navigation, and instead of creeping servilely along the coast, ventured into the open sea. In consequence of taking this course, Gilhanez, who commanded one of prince Henry's ships, doubled Cape Bojador (1433), the boundary of the Portuguese navigation upwards of twenty years, and which had hitherto been deemed unpassable.

[11] Historical Relation of the first Discovery of Madeira, translated from the Portuguese of Fran. Alcafarana, p. 15, &c.

[x] Lud. Guicciardini Descritt. de Paesi Bassi, p. 180, 181.

This successful voyage, which the ignorance of the age placed on a level with the most famous exploits recorded in history, opened a new sphere to navigation, as it discovered the vast continent of Africa, still washed by the Atlantic ocean, and stretching towards the south. Part of this was soon explored; the Portuguese advanced within the tropics, and in the space of a few years they discovered the river Senegal, and all the coast extending from Cape Blanco to Cape de Verd.

Hitherto the Portuguese had been guided in their discoveries, or encouraged to attempt them, by the light and information which they received from the works of the ancient mathematicians and geographers. But, when they began to enter the torrid zone, the notion which prevailed among the ancients, that the heat, which reigned perpetually there, was so excessive as to render it uninhabitable, deterred them, for some time, from proceeding. Their own observations, when they first ventured into this unknown and formidable region, tended to confirm the opinion of antiquity concerning the violent operation of the direct rays of the sun. As far as the river Senegal, the Portuguese had found the coast of Africa inhabited by people nearly resembling the Moors of Barbary. When they advanced to the south of that river, the human form seemed to put on a new appearance. They beheld men with skins black as ebony, with short curled hair, flat noses, thick lips, and all the peculiar features which are now known to distinguish the race of negroes. This surprising alteration they naturally attributed to the influence of heat, and if they should advance nearer to the line, they began to dread that its effects would be still more violent. Those dangers were exaggerated, and many other objections against attempting farther discoveries were proposed by some of the grandees, who, from ignorance, from envy, or from that cold timid prudence,

which rejects whatever has the air of novelty or enterprize, had hitherto condemned all prince Henry's schemes. They represented, that it was altogether chimerical to expect any advantage from countries situated in that region, which the wisdom and experience of antiquity had pronounced to be unfit for the habitation of men ; that their forefathers, satisfied with cultivating the territory which Providence had allotted them, did not waste the strength of the kingdom in fruitless projects, in quest of new settlements ; that Portugal was already exhausted by the expence of attempts to discover lands which either did not exist, or which nature destined to remain unknown ; and was drained of men, who might have been employed in undertakings attended with more certain success, and productive of greater benefit. But neither their appeal to the authority of the ancients, nor their reasonings concerning the interests of Portugal, made any impression upon the determined philosophic mind of prince Henry. The discoveries which he had already made, convinced him that the ancients had little more than a conjectural knowledge of the torrid zone. He was no less satisfied that the political arguments of his opponents with respect to the interest of Portugal were malevolent and ill founded. In those sentiments he was strenuously supported by his brother Pedro, who governed the kingdom as guardian of their nephew Alphonso V. who had succeeded to the throne during his minority (1438) ; and, instead of slackening his efforts, Henry continued to pursue his discoveries with fresh ardour.

But, in order to silence all the murmurs of opposition, he endeavoured to obtain the sanction of the highest authority in favour of his operations. With this view, he applied to the pope, and represented, in pompous terms, the pious and unwearied zeal with which he had exerted himself during twenty years, in discovering unknown countries, the wretched in-

habitants of which were utter strangers to true religion, wandering in heathen darkness, or led astray by the delusions of Mahomet. He besought the holy father, to whom, as the vicar of Christ, all the kingdoms of the earth were subject, to confer on the crown of Portugal a right to all the countries possessed by infidels, which should be discovered by the industry of its subjects, and subdued by the force of its arms. He intreated him to enjoin all Christian powers, under the highest penalties, not to molest Portugal while engaged in this laudable enterprize, and to prohibit them from settling in any of the countries which the Portuguese should discover. He promised that, in all their expeditions, it should be the chief object of his countrymen to spread the knowledge of the Christian religion, to establish the authority of the holy see, and to increase the flock of the universal pastor. As it was by improving with dexterity every favourable conjuncture for acquiring new powers, that the court of Rome had gradually extended its usurpations, Eugene IV. the pontiff to whom this application was made, eagerly seized the opportunity which now presented itself. He instantly perceived, that by complying with prince Henry's request, he might exercise a prerogative no less flattering in its own nature, than likely to prove beneficial in its consequences. A bull was accordingly issued, in which, after applauding in the strongest terms the past efforts of the Portuguese, and exhorting them to proceed in that laudable career on which they had entered, he granted them an exclusive right to all the countries which they should discover, from Cape Non to the continent of India.

Extravagant as this donation, comprehending such a large portion of the habitable globe, would now appear even in catholic countries, no person in the fifteenth century doubted that the pope, in the plenitude of his apostolic power, had a right to confer

it. Prince Henry was soon sensible of the advantages which he derived from this transaction. His schemes were authorised and sanctified by the bull approving of them. The spirit of discovery was connected with zeal for religion, which, in that age, was a principle of such activity and vigour, as to influence the conduct of nations. All Christian princes were deterred from intruding into those countries which the Portuguese had discovered, or from interrupting the progress of their navigation and conquests [y].

The fame of the Portuguese voyages soon spread over Europe. Men, long accustomed to circumscribe the activity and knowledge of the human mind within the limits to which they had been hitherto confined, were astonished to behold the sphere of navigation so suddenly enlarged, and a prospect opened of visiting regions of the globe, the existence of which was unknown in former times. The learned and speculative reasoned and formed theories concerning those unexpected discoveries. The vulgar inquired and wondered; while enterprising adventurers crowded from every part of Europe, soliciting prince Henry to employ them in this honourable service. Many Venetians and Genoese, in particular, who were, at that time, superior to all other nations in the science of naval affairs, entered aboard the Portuguese ships, and acquired a more perfect and extensive knowledge of their profession in that new school of navigation. In emulation of these foreigners, the Portuguese exerted their own talents. The nation seconded the designs of the prince. Private merchants formed companies (1446), with a view to search for unknown countries. The Cape de Verd islands, which lie off the promontory of that name, were discovered (1449), and soon after the isles called the Azores. As the former of these are above three hundred miles from the African coast, and the latter nine hundred

[y] See Note X.

miles from any continent, it is evident, by their venturing so boldly into the open seas, that the Portuguese had, by this time, improved greatly in the art of navigation.

While the passion for engaging in new undertakings was thus warm and active, it received an unfortunate check by the death of prince Henry, whose superior knowledge had hitherto directed all the operations of the discoverers, and whose patronage had encouraged and protected them. But notwithstanding all the advantages which they derived from these, the Portuguese, during his life, did not advance, in their utmost progress towards the south, within five degrees of the equinoctial line; and, after their continued exertions for half a century (from 1412 to 1463), hardly fifteen hundred miles of the coast of Africa were discovered. To an age acquainted with the efforts of navigation in its state of maturity and improvement, those essays of its early years must necessarily appear feeble and unskilful. But, inconsiderable as they may be deemed, they were sufficient to turn the curiosity of the European nations into a new channel, to excite an enterprising spirit, and to point the way to future discoveries.

Alphonso, who possessed the throne of Portugal at the time of prince Henry's death, was so much engaged in supporting his own pretensions to the crown of Castile, or in carrying on his expeditions against the Moors in Barbary, that the force of his kingdom being exerted in other operations, he could not prosecute the discoveries in Africa with ardour. He committed the conduct of them to Fernando Gomez, a merchant in Lisbon, to whom he granted an exclusive right of commerce with all the countries of which prince Henry had taken possession. Under the restraint and oppression of a monopoly, the spirit of discovery languished. It ceased to be a national object, and became the concern of a private man.



more attentive to his own gain, than to the glory of his country. Some progress, however, was made. The Portuguese ventured at length to cross the line (1471), and, to their astonishment, found that region of the torrid zone, which was supposed to be scorched with intolerable heat, to be not only habitable, but populous and fertile.

John II. who succeeded his father Alphonso (1481), possessed talents capable both of forming and executing great designs. As part of his revenues, while prince, had arisen from duties on the trade with the newly discovered countries, this naturally turned his attention towards them, and satisfied him with respect to their utility and importance. In proportion as his knowledge of these countries extended, the possession of them appeared to be of greater consequence. While the Portuguese proceeded along the coast of Africa, from Cape Non to the river of Senegal, they found all that extensive tract to be sandy, barren, and thinly inhabited by a wretched people, professing the Mahometan religion, and subject to the vast empire of Morocco. But to the south of that river, the power and religion of the Mahometans were unknown. The country was divided into small independent principalities, the population was considerable, the soil fertile [z], and the Portuguese soon discovered that it produced ivory, rich gums, gold, and other valuable commodities. By the acquisition of these, commerce was enlarged, and became more adventurous. Men, animated and rendered active by the certain prospect of gain, pursued discovery with greater eagerness, than when they were excited only by curiosity and hope.

This spirit derived no small reinforcement of vigour from the countenance of such a monarch as

[z] *Navigatio Aloysii Cadamusti apud Novem Orbem Grynzi*, p. 2, 18. *Navigat. all Isola di San Tome per un Pilotto Portughe*, Ramusio, i. 115.



John. Declaring himself the patron of every attempt towards discovery, he promoted it with all the ardour of his grand-uncle prince Henry, and with superior power. The effects of this were immediately felt. A powerful fleet was fitted out (1484), which, after discovering the kingdoms of Benin and Congo, advanced above fifteen hundred miles beyond the line, and the Portuguese, for the first time, beheld a new heaven, and observed the stars of another hemisphere. John was not only solicitous to discover, but attentive to secure the possession of those countries. He built forts on the coast of Guinea; he sent out colonies to settle there; he established a commercial intercourse with the more powerful kingdoms; he endeavoured to render such as were feeble or divided, tributary to the crown of Portugal. Some of the petty princes voluntarily acknowledged themselves his vassals. Others were compelled to do so by force of arms. A regular and well-digested system was formed with respect to this new object of policy, and by firmly adhering to it, the Portuguese power and commerce in Africa were established upon a solid foundation.

By their constant intercourse with the people of Africa, the Portuguese gradually acquired some knowledge of those parts of that country which they had not visited. The information which they received from the natives, added to what they had observed in their own voyages, began to open prospects more extensive, and to suggest the idea of schemes more important, than those which had hitherto allured and occupied them. They had detected the error of the ancients concerning the nature of the torrid zone. They found, as they proceeded southwards, that the continent of Africa, instead of extending in breadth, according to the doctrine of Ptolemy [a], at that time the oracle and guide of the learned in the science

[a] Vide Nov. Orbis Tabul. Geograph. secund. Ptolem, Amst. 1730.

of geography, appeared sensibly to contract itself, and to bend towards the east. This induced them to give credit to the accounts of the ancient Phenician voyages round Africa, which had long been deemed fabulous, and led them to conceive hopes that by following the same route, they might arrive at the East Indies, and engross that commerce which had been the source of wealth and power to every nation possessed of it. The comprehensive genius of prince Henry, as we may conjecture from the words of the pope's bull, had early formed some idea of this navigation. But though his countrymen, at that period, were incapable of conceiving the extent of his views and schemes, all the Portuguese mathematicians and pilots now concurred in representing them as well founded and practicable. The king entered with warmth into their sentiments, and began to concert measures for this arduous and important voyage.

Before his preparations for this expedition were finished, accounts were transmitted from Africa, that various nations along the coast had mentioned a mighty kingdom situated on their continent, at a great distance towards the east, the king of which, according to their description, professed the Christian religion. The Portuguese monarch immediately concluded, that this must be the empire of Abyssinia, to whom the Europeans, seduced by a mistake of Rubruquis, Marco Polo, and other travellers to the east, absurdly gave the name of Prester or Presbyter John; and as he hoped to receive information and assistance from a Christian prince, in prosecuting a scheme that tended to propagate their common faith, he resolved to open, if possible, some intercourse with his court. With this view, he made choice of Pedro de Covillam and Alphonso de Payva, who were perfect masters of the Arabic language, and sent them into the east, to search for the residence of this unknown potentate, and to make him proffers

of friendship. They had in charge likewise to procure whatever intelligence the nations which they visited could supply, with respect to the trade of India, and the course of navigation to that continent [b].

While John made this new attempt by land, to obtain some knowledge of the country, which he wished so ardently to discover, he did not neglect the prosecution of this great design by sea. The conduct of a voyage for this purpose (1486), the most arduous and important which the Portuguese had ever projected, was committed to Bartholomew Diaz, an officer whose sagacity, experience, and fortitude rendered him equal to the undertaking. He stretched boldly towards the south, and proceeding beyond the utmost limits to which his countrymen had hitherto advanced, discovered near a thousand miles of new country. Neither the danger to which he was exposed, by a succession of violent tempests in unknown seas, and by the frequent mutinies of his crew, nor the calamities of famine, which he suffered from losing his store-ship, could deter him from prosecuting his enterprize. In recompence of his labours and perseverance, he at last descried that lofty promontory which bounds Africa to the south. But to descry it, was all that he had in his power to accomplish. The violence of the winds, the shattered condition of his ships, and the turbulent spirit of his sailors, compelled him to return, after a voyage of sixteen months, in which he discovered a far greater extent of country than any former navigator. Diaz had called the promontory which terminated his voyage *Cabo Tormentoso*, or the stormy Cape; but the king, his master, as he now entertained no doubt of having found the long desired route to India, gave

[b] Faria y Sousa Port. Asia, vol. i. p. 26. Lafitau Decouv. de Port. i. 46.

it a name more inviting, and of better omen, *The CAPE of GOOD HOPE* [c].

Those sanguine expectations of success were confirmed by the intelligence which John received over land, in consequence of his embassy to Abyssinia. Covillam and Payva, in obedience to their master's instructions, had repaired to Grand Cairo. From that city, they travelled along with a caravan of Egyptian merchants, and embarking on the Red Sea, arrived at Aden in Arabia. There they separated: Payva sailed directly towards Abyssinia; Covillam embarked for the East Indies, and having visited Calcut, Goa, and other cities on the Malabar coast, returned to Sofala, on the east side of Africa, and thence to Grand Cairo, which Payva and he had fixed upon as their place of rendezvous. Unfortunately the former was cruelly murdered in Abyssinia, but Covillam found at Cairo two Portuguese Jews, whom John, whose provident sagacity attended to every circumstance that could facilitate the execution of his schemes, had dispatched after them, in order to receive a detail of their proceedings, and to communicate to them new instructions. By one of these Jews, Covillam transmitted to Portugal a journal of his travels by sea and land, his remarks upon the trade of India, together with exact maps of the coasts on which he had touched; and from what he himself had observed, as well as from the information of skilful seamen in different countries, he concluded, that by sailing round Africa, a passage might be found to the East Indies [d].

The happy coincidence of Covillam's opinion and report, with the discoveries which Diaz had lately made, left hardly any shadow of doubt with respect to the possibility of sailing from Europe to India. But

[c] Faria y Sousa Port. Asia, vol. i. p. 26.

[d] Faria y Sousa Port. Asia, vol. i. p. 27. Lafitau Decouv. i. 48.

the vast length of the voyage, and the furious storms which Diaz had encountered near the Cape of Good Hope, alarmed and intimidated the Portuguese to such a degree, although by long experience they were now become adventurous and skilful mariners; that some time was requisite to prepare their minds for this dangerous and extraordinary voyage. The courage, however, and authority of the monarch, gradually dispelled the vain fears of his subjects, or made it necessary to conceal them. As John thought himself now upon the eve of accomplishing that great design, which had been the principal object of his reign, his earnestness in prosecuting it became so vehement, that it occupied his thoughts by day, and bereaved him of sleep through the night. While he was taking every precaution that his wisdom and experience could suggest, in order to insure the success of the expedition, which was to decide concerning the fate of his favourite project, the fame of the vast discoveries which the Portuguese had already made, the reports concerning the extraordinary intelligence which they had received from the east, and the prospect of the voyage which they now meditated, drew the attention of all the European nations, and held them in suspense and expectation. By some, the maritime skill and navigations of the Portuguese were compared with those of the Phenicians and Carthaginians, and exalted above them. Others formed conjectures concerning the revolutions which the success of the Portuguese schemes might occasion in the course of trade, and the political state of Europe. The Venetians began to be disquieted with the apprehension of losing their Indian commerce, the monopoly of which was the chief source of their power as well as opulence, and the Portuguese already enjoyed in fancy, the wealth of the east. But, during this interval, which gave such scope to the various workings of curiosity, of hope and of fear, an account

was brought to Europe of an event no less extraordinary than unexpected, the discovery of a New World situated in the west ; and the eyes and admiration of mankind turned immediately towards that great object.



## BOOK II.

**A**MONG the foreigners whom the fame of the discoveries made by the Portuguese had allured into their service, was Christopher Colon or Columbus a subject of the republic of Genoa. Neither the time nor place of his birth are known with certainty [a]; but he was descended of an honourable family, though reduced to indigence by various misfortunes. His ancestors having betaken themselves for subsistence to a seafaring life, Columbus discovered, in his early youth, the peculiar character and talents which mark out a man for that profession. His parents, instead of thwarting this original propensity of his mind, seem to have encouraged and confirmed it, by the education which they gave him. After acquiring some knowledge of the Latin tongue, the only language in which science was taught at that time, he was instructed in geometry, cosmography, astronomy, and the art of drawing. To these he applied with such ardour and predilection, on account of their connection with navigation, his favourite object, that he advanced with rapid proficiency in the study of them. Thus qualified, he went to sea, at the age of fourteen (1461), and began his career on that element which conducted him to so much glory. His early voyages were to those ports in the Mediterra-

[a] See NOTE XI.

nean which his countrymen the Genoese frequented. This being a sphere too narrow for his active mind, he made an excursion to the northern seas (1467), and visited the coasts of Iceland, to which the English and other nations had begun to resort on account of its fishery. As navigation, in every direction, was now become enterprising, he proceeded beyond that island, the Thule of the ancients, and advanced several degrees within the polar circle. Having satisfied his curiosity, by a voyage which tended more to enlarge his knowledge of naval affairs, than to improve his fortune, he entered into the service of a famous sea-captain of his own name and family. This man commanded a small squadron, fitted out at his own expence, and by cruising sometimes against the Mahometans, sometimes against the Venetians, the rivals of his country in trade, had acquired both wealth and reputation. With him Columbus continued for several years, no less distinguished for his courage, than for his experience as a sailor. At length, in an obstinate engagement, off the coast of Portugal, with some Venetian caravals, returning richly laden from the Low Countries, the vessel on board which he served took fire, together with one of the enemy's ships, to which it was fast grappled. In this dreadful extremity his intrepidity and presence of mind did not forsake him. He threw himself into the sea, laid hold of a floating oar, and by the support of it, and his dexterity in swimming, he reached the shore, though above two leagues distant, and saved a life reserved for great undertakings [b].

As soon as he recovered strength for the journey, he repaired to Lisbon, where many of his countrymen were settled. They soon conceived such a favourable opinion of his merit, as well as talents, that they warmly solicited him to remain in that kingdom, where his naval skill and experience could not fail of

[b] Life of Columbus, c. v.



rendering him conspicuous. To every adventurer, animated either with curiosity to visit new countries, or with ambition to distinguish himself, the Portuguese service was at that time extremely inviting. Columbus listened with a favourable ear to the advice of his friends, and having gained the esteem of a Portuguese lady, whom he married, fixed his residence in Lisbon. This alliance, instead of detaching him from a seafaring life, contributed to enlarge the sphere of his naval knowledge, and to excite a desire of extending it still farther. His wife was a daughter of Bartholomew Perestrello, one of the captains employed by prince Henry in his early navigations, and who, under his protection, had discovered and planted the islands of Porto Santo and Madeira. Columbus got possession of the journals and charts of this experienced navigator, and from them he learned the course which the Portuguese had held in making their discoveries, as well as the various circumstances which guided or encouraged them in their attempts. The study of these soothed and inflamed his favourite passion; and while he contemplated the maps, and read the descriptions of the new countries which Perestrello had seen, his impatience to visit them became irresistible. In order to indulge it, he made a voyage to Madeira, and continued during several years to trade with that island, with the Canaries, the Azores, the settlements in Guinea, and all the other places which the Portuguese had discovered on the continent of Africa [c].

By the experience which Columbus acquired, during such a variety of voyages, to almost every part of the globe with which, at that time, any intercourse was carried on by sea, he was now become one of the most skilful navigators in Europe. But, not satisfied with that praise, his ambition aimed at something more. The successful progress of the Portu-

[c] Life of Columbus, c. iv. v.



guese navigators had awakened a spirit of curiosity and emulation, which set every man of science upon examining all the circumstances that led to the discoveries which they had made, or that afforded a prospect of succeeding in any new and bolder undertaking. The mind of Columbus, naturally inquisitive, capable of deep reflection, and turned to speculations of this kind, was so often employed in revolving the principles upon which the Portuguese had founded their schemes of discovery, and the mode on which they had carried them on, that he gradually began to form an idea of improving upon their plan, and of accomplishing discoveries which hitherto they had attempted in vain.

To find out a passage by sea to the East Indies, was the great object in view at that period. From the time that the Portuguese doubled Cape de Verd, this was the point at which they aimed in all their navigations, and, in comparison with it, all their discoveries in Africa appeared inconsiderable. The fertility and riches of India had been known for many ages: its spices and other valuable commodities were in high request throughout Europe, and the vast wealth of the Venetians arising from their having engrossed this trade, had raised the envy of all nations. But how intent soever the Portuguese were upon discovering a new route to those desirable regions, they searched for it only by steering towards the south, in hopes of arriving at India, by turning to the east, after they had sailed round the farther extremity of Africa. This course was still unknown, and, even if discovered, was of such immense length, that a voyage from Europe to India must have appeared, at that period, an undertaking, extremely arduous, and of very uncertain issue. More than half a century had been employed in advancing from Cape Non to the equator; a much longer space of time might elapse before the more extensive navigation from

that to India could be accomplished. These reflections upon the uncertainty, the danger and tediousness of the course which the Portuguese were pursuing, naturally led Columbus to consider whether a shorter and more direct passage to the East Indies might not be found out. After revolving long and seriously every circumstance suggested by his superior knowledge in the theory as well as practice of navigation, after comparing attentively the observations of modern pilots with the hints and conjectures of ancient authors, he at last concluded, that by sailing directly towards the west, across the Atlantic ocean, new countries, which probably formed a part of the great continent of India, must infallibly be discovered.

Principles and arguments of various kinds, and derived from different sources, induced him to adopt this opinion, seemingly as chimerical as it was new and extraordinary. The spherical figure of the earth was known, and its magnitude ascertained with some degree of accuracy. From this it was evident, that the continents of Europe, Asia, and Africa, as far as they were known at that time, formed but a small portion of the terraqueous globe. It was suitable to our ideas concerning the wisdom and beneficence of the Author of Nature, to believe that the vast space still unexplored, was not covered entirely by a waste unprofitable ocean, but occupied by countries fit for the habitation of man. It appeared likewise extremely probable, that the continent, on this side of the globe, was balanced by a proportional quantity of land in the other hemisphere. These conclusions concerning the existence of another continent, drawn from the figure and structure of the globe, were confirmed by the observations and conjectures of modern navigators. A Portuguese pilot, having stretched farther to the west than was usual at that time, took up a piece of timber artificially carved, floating upon the

sea ; and as it was driven towards him by a westerly wind, he concluded that it came from some unknown land, situated in that quarter. Columbus' brother-in-law had found, to the west of the Madeira Isles, a piece of timber fashioned in the same manner, and brought by the same wind ; and had seen likewise canes of an enormous size floating upon the waves, which resembled those described by Ptolemy as productions peculiar to the East Indies [*d*]. After a course of westerly winds, trees, torn up by the roots, were often driven upon the coasts of the Azores, and at one time the dead bodies of two men with singular features, resembling neither the inhabitants of Europe nor of Africa, were cast ashore there.

As the force of this united evidence, arising from theoretical principles and practical observations, led Columbus to expect the discovery of new countries in the western ocean, other reasons induced him to believe that these must be connected with the continent of India. Though the ancients had hardly ever penetrated into India farther than the banks of the Ganges, yet some Greek authors had ventured to describe the provinces beyond that river. As men are prone, and at liberty, to magnify what is remote or unknown, they represented them as regions of an immense extent. Ctesias affirmed, that India was as large as all the rest of Asia. Onesicritus, whom Pliny the naturalist follows [*e*], contended that it was equal to a third part of the habitable earth. Nearchus asserted, that it would take four months to march in a straight line from one extremity of India to the other [*f*]. The journal of Marco Polo, who had proceeded towards the east far beyond the limits to which any European had ever advanced, seemed to confirm these exaggerated accounts of the ancients. By his magnificent descriptions of the kingdoms of

[*d*] Lib. i. c. 17.[*f*] Strab. Geogr. lib. xv. p. 1011.[*e*] Nat. Hist. lib. vi. c. 17.

*Cathay* and *Cipango*, and of many other countries, the names of which were unknown in Europe, India appeared to be a region of vast extent. From these accounts, which, however defective, were the most accurate that the people of Europe had received at that period, with respect to the remote parts of the east, Columbus drew a just conclusion. He contended, that, in proportion as the continent of India stretched out towards the east, it must, in consequence of the spherical figure of the earth, approach nearer to the islands which had lately been discovered to the west of Africa ; that the distance from the one to the other was probably not very considerable ; and that the most direct, as well as shortest course to the remote regions of the east, was to be found by sailing due west [g]. This notion, concerning the vicinity of India to the western parts of our continent, was countenanced by some eminent writers among the ancients, the sanction of whose authority was necessary, in that age, to procure a favourable reception to any tenet. Aristotle thought it probable that the Columns of Hercules, or Straits of Gibraltar, were not far removed from the East Indies, and that there might be a communication by sea between them [h]. Seneca, in terms still more explicit, affirms, that, with a fair wind, one might sail from Spain to India, in a few days [i]. The famous Atlantic island described by Plato, and supposed by many to be a real country, beyond which an unknown continent was situated, is represented by him as lying at no great distance from Spain. After weighing all these particulars, Columbus, in whose character the modesty and diffidence of true genius was united with the ardent enthusiasm of a projector, did not rest with such abso-

[g] See NOTE XII.

[h] Aristot. de Cælo, lib. ii. c. 14. edit. Du Val, Par 1629. vol. i. p. 472.

[i] Senec. Quæst. Natur. lib. i. in proem.

lute assurance either upon his own arguments or upon the authority of the ancients, as not to consult such of his contemporaries as were capable of comprehending the nature of the evidence which he produced in support of his opinion. As early as the year one thousand four hundred and seventy-four, he communicated his ideas concerning the probability of discovering new countries, by sailing westwards, to Paul, a physician of Florence, eminent for his knowledge of cosmography, and who, from the learning as well as candour which he discovers in his reply, appears to have been well entitled to the confidence which Columbus placed in him. He warmly approved of the plan, suggested several facts in confirmation of it, and encouraged Columbus to persevere in an undertaking so laudable, and which must redound so much to the honour of his country, and the benefit of Europe [*k*].

To a mind less capable of forming and of executing great designs than that of Columbus, all those reasonings, and observations, and authorities, would have served only as the foundation of some plausible and fruitless theory, which might have furnished matter for ingenious discourse, or fanciful conjecture. But with his sanguine and enterprising temper, speculation led directly to action. Fully satisfied himself with respect to the truth of his system, he was impatient to bring it to the test of experiment, and to set out upon a voyage of discovery. The first step towards this was to secure the patronage of some of the considerable powers in Europe, capable of undertaking such an enterprize. As long absence had not extinguished the affection which he bore to his native country, he wished that it should reap the fruits of his labours and invention. With this view he laid his scheme before the senate of Genoa, and making his country the first tender of his service,

[*k*] Life of Columbus, c. viii.

offered to sail under the banners of the republic, in quest of the new regions which he expected to discover. But Columbus had resided for so many years in foreign parts, that his countrymen were unacquainted with his abilities and character ; and, though a maritime people, were so little accustomed to distant voyages, that they could form no just idea of the principles on which he founded his hopes of success. They inconsiderately rejected his proposal, as the dream of a chimerical projector, and lost for ever the opportunity of restoring their commonwealth to its ancient splendour [1].

Having performed what was due to his country, Columbus was so little discouraged by the repulse which he had received, that, instead of relinquishing his undertaking, he pursued it with fresh ardour. He made his next overture to John II. king of Portugal, in whose dominions he had been long established, and whom he considered, on that account, as having the second claim to his service. Here every circumstance seemed to promise him a more favourable reception. He applied to a monarch of an enterprising genius, no incompetent judge in naval affairs, and proud of patronising every attempt to discover new countries. His subjects were the most experienced navigators in Europe, and the least apt to be intimidated either by the novelty or boldness of any maritime expedition. In Portugal, the professional skill of Columbus, as well as his personal good qualities, were thoroughly known ; and as the former rendered it probable that his scheme was not altogether visionary, the latter exempted him from the suspicion of any sinister intention in proposing it. Accordingly, the king listened to him in the most gracious manner, and referred the consideration of his plan to Diego Ortiz, bishop of Ceuta, and two Jewish physicians, eminent cosmographers, whom he

[1] Herrera Hist. de las Indias Occid, dec. 1, lib. i, c. 7,

was accustomed to consult in matters of this kind. As in Genoa, ignorance had opposed and disappointed Columbus; in Lisbon, he had to combat with prejudice, an enemy no less formidable. The persons, according to whose decision his scheme was to be adopted or rejected, had been the chief directors of the Portuguese navigations, and had advised to search for a passage to India, by steering a course directly opposite to that which Columbus recommended: shorter and more certain. They could not, therefore, approve of his proposal, without submitting to the double mortification, of condemning their own theory, and of acknowledging his superior sagacity. After teasing him with captious questions, and starting innumerable objections, with a view of betraying him into such a particular explanation of his system as might draw from him a full discovery of its nature, they deferred passing a final judgment with respect to it. In the mean time, they conspired to rob him of the honour and advantages which he expected from the success of his scheme, advising the king to dispatch a vessel secretly, in order to attempt the proposed discovery, by following exactly the course which Columbus seemed to point out. John, forgetting on this occasion the sentiments becoming a monarch, meanly adopted this perfidious counsel. But the pilot, chosen to execute Columbus' plan, having neither the genius, nor the fortitude of its author. Contrary winds arose, no sight of approaching land appeared, his courage failed, and he returned to Lisbon, execrating the project as equally extravagant and dangerous [*m*].

Upon discovering this dishonourable transaction Columbus felt the indignation natural to an ingenious mind, and in the warmth of his resentment determined to break off all intercourse with a nation capable of such flagrant treachery. He instantly

[*m*] Life of Columbus, c. xi. Herrera, decad. i. lib. i. c.



quitted the kingdom, and landed in Spain towards the close of the year one thousand four hundred and eighty-four. As he was now at liberty to court the protection of any patron, whom he could engage to approve of his plan, and to carry it into execution, he resolved to propose it in person to Ferdinand and Isabella, who at that time governed the united kingdoms of Castile and Aragon. But as he had already experienced the uncertain issue of applications to kings and ministers, he took the precaution of sending into England his brother Bartholomew, to whom he had fully communicated his ideas, in order that he might negotiate, at the same time, with Henry VII. who was reputed one of the most sagacious as well as opulent princes in Europe.

It was not without reason, that Columbus entertained doubts and fears with respect to the reception of his proposals in the Spanish court. Spain was, at that juncture, engaged in a dangerous war with Granada, the last of the Moorish kingdoms in that country. The wary and suspicious temper of Ferdinand was not formed to relish bold or uncommon designs. Isabella, though more generous and enterprising, was under the influence of her husband in all her actions. The Spaniards had hitherto made no efforts to extend navigation beyond its ancient limits, and had beheld the amazing progress of discovery among their neighbours the Portuguese, without one attempt to imitate or to rival them. The war with the infidels afforded an ample field to the national activity and love of glory. Under circumstances so unfavourable, it was impossible for Columbus to make rapid progress with a nation, naturally slow and dilatory in forming all its resolutions. His character, however, was admirably adapted to that of the people, whose confidence and protection he solicited. He was grave, though courteous in his deportment; circumspect in his words



and actions ; irreproachable in his morals ; and exemplary in his attention to all the duties and functions of religion. By qualities so respectable, he not only gained many private friends, but acquired such general esteem, that, notwithstanding the plainness of his appearance, suitable to the mediocrity of his fortune, he was not considered as a mere adventurer, to whom indigence had suggested a visionary project, but was received as a person to whose propositions serious attention was due.

Ferdinand and Isabella, though fully occupied by their operations against the Moors, paid so much regard to Columbus, as to remit the consideration of his plan to the queen's confessor, Ferdinand de Talavera. He consulted such of his countrymen as were supposed best qualified to decide with respect to a subject of this kind. But true science had, hitherto, made so little progress in Spain, that the pretended philosophers, selected to judge in a matter of such moment, did not comprehend the first principles upon which Columbus founded his conjectures and hopes. Some of them, from mistaken notions concerning the dimensions of the globe, contended that a voyage to those remote parts of the east, which Columbus expected to discover, could not be performed in less than three years. Others, concluded, that either he would find the ocean to be of infinite extent, according to the opinion of some ancient philosophers ; or, if he should persist in steering towards the west beyond a certain point, that the convex figure of the globe would prevent his return, and that he must inevitably perish, in the vain attempt to open a communication between the two opposite hemispheres, which nature had for ever disjoined. Even without designing to enter into any particular discussion, many rejected the scheme in general, upon the credit of a maxim, under which the ignorant and unenterprising shelter themselves in

every age, "That it is presumptuous in any person, to suppose that he alone possesses knowledge, superior to all the rest of mankind united." They maintained, that if there were really any such countries as Columbus pretended, they could not have remained so long concealed, nor would the wisdom and sagacity of former ages have left the glory of this invention to an obscure Genoese pilot.

It required all Columbus' patience and address to negotiate with men capable of advancing such strange propositions. He had to contend not only with the obstinacy of ignorance, but with what is still more intractable, the pride of false knowledge. After innumerable conferences, and wasting five years in fruitless endeavours to inform and to satisfy judges so little capable of deciding with propriety, Talavera, at last, made such an unfavourable report to Ferdinand, and Isabella, as induced them to acquaint Columbus, that until the war with the Moors should be brought to a period, it would be imprudent to engage in any new and extensive enterprize.

Whatever care was taken to soften the harshness of this declaration, Columbus considered it as a final rejection of his proposals. But happily for mankind, that superiority of genius, which is capable of forming great and uncommon designs, is usually accompanied with an ardent enthusiasm, which can neither be cooled by delays, nor damped by disappointment. Columbus was of this sanguine temper. Though he felt deeply the cruel blow given to his hopes, and retired immediately from a court, where he had been amused so long with vain expectations, his confidence in the justness of his own system did not diminish, and his impatience to demonstrate the truth of it by an actual experiment, became greater than ever. Having courted the protection of sovereign states without success, he applied, next, to persons of inferior rank, and addressed successively the dukes

of Medina, Sidonia, and Medina Celi, who, though subjects, were possessed of power and opulence more than equal to the enterprize which he projected. His negociations with them proved as fruitless, as those in which he had been hitherto engaged ; for these noblemen were either as little convinced by Columbus' arguments as their superiors, or they were afraid of alarming the jealousy, and offending the pride of Ferdinand, by countenancing a scheme which he had rejected [*n*].

Amid the painful sensations occasioned by such a succession of disappointments, Columbus had to sustain the additional distress, of having received no accounts of his brother, whom he had sent to the court of England. In his voyage to that country, Bartholomew had been so unfortunate as to fall into the hands of pirates, who having stripped him of every thing, detained him a prisoner for several years. At length, he made his escape, and arrived in London, but in such extreme indigence, that he was obliged to employ himself, during a considerable time, in drawing and selling maps, in order to pick up as much money as would purchase a decent dress, in which he might venture to appear at court. He then laid before the king the proposals, with which he had been entrusted by his brother, and, notwithstanding Henry's excessive caution and parsimony, which rendered him averse to new or expensive undertakings, he received Columbus' overtures, with more approbation than any monarch to whom they had hitherto been presented.

Meanwhile, Columbus being unacquainted with his brother's fate, and having now no prospect of encouragement in Spain, resolved to visit the court of England in person, in hopes of meeting with a more favourable reception there. He had already made preparations for this purpose, and taken mea-

[*n*] Life of Columbus, c. 13. Herrera, dec. 1. lib. i. c. 7.

asures for the disposal of his children during his absence, when Juan Perez, the guardian of the monastery of Rabida, near Palos, in which they had been educated, earnestly solicited him to defer his journey for a short time. Perez was a man of considerable learning, and of some credit with queen Isabella, to whom he was known personally. He was warmly attached to Columbus, with whose abilities as well as integrity he had many opportunities of being acquainted. Prompted by curiosity or by friendship, he entered upon an accurate examination of his system, in conjunction with a physician settled in the neighbourhood, who was a considerable proficient in mathematical knowledge. This investigation satisfied them so thoroughly, with respect to the solidity of the principles on which Columbus founded his opinion, and the probability of success in executing the plan which he proposed, that Perez, in order to prevent his country from being deprived of the glory and benefit, which must accrue to the patrons of such a grand enterprise, ventured to write to Isabella, conjuring her to consider the matter anew, with the attention which it merited.

Moved by the representations of a person whom she respected, Isabella desired Perez to repair immediately to the village of Santa Fé, in which, on account of the siege of Granada, the court resided at that time, that she might confer with him upon this important subject. The first effect of their interview was a gracious invitation of Columbus back to court (1491), accompanied with the present of a small sum to equip him for the journey. As there was now a certain prospect, that the war with the Moors would speedily be brought to an happy issue by the reduction of Granada, which would leave the nation at liberty to engage in new undertakings; this, as well as the mark of royal favour, with which Columbus had been lately honoured, encouraged his friends to

appear with greater confidence than formerly in support of his scheme. The chief of these, Alonso de Quintanilla, comptroller of the finances in Castile, and Luis de Santangel, receiver of the ecclesiastical revenues in Aragon whose meritorious zeal in promoting this great design entitles their names to an honourable place in history, introduced Columbus to many persons of high rank, and interested them warmly in his behalf.

But it was not an easy matter to inspire Ferdinand with favourable sentiments. He still regarded Columbus' project as extravagant and chimerical; and in order to render the efforts of his partizans ineffectual, he had the address to employ in his new negotiation with him, some of the persons who had formerly pronounced his scheme to be impracticable. To their astonishment Columbus appeared before them with the same confident hopes of success as formerly, and insisted upon the same high recompence. He proposed that a small fleet should be fitted out, under his command, to attempt the discovery, and demanded to be appointed hereditary admiral and viceroy of all the seas and lands which he should discover, and to have the tenths of the profits arising from them, settled irrevocably upon himself and his descendants. At the same time, he offered to advance the eighth part of the sum necessary for accomplishing his design, on condition that he should be entitled to a proportional share of benefit from the adventure. If the enterprise should totally miscarry, he made no stipulation for any reward or emolument whatever. Instead of viewing this conduct as the clearest evidence of his full persuasion with respect to the truth of his own system, or being struck with that magnanimity which, after so many delays and repulses, would stoop to nothing inferior to its original claims, the persons with whom Columbus treated, began meanly to calculate the expence of the expedi-

tion, and the value of the reward which he demanded. The expence, moderate as it was, they represented to be too great for Spain, in the present exhausted state of its finances. They contended, that the honours and emoluments claimed by Columbus were exorbitant, even if he should perform the utmost of what he had promised; and if all his sanguine hopes should prove illusive, such vast concessions to an adventurer would be deemed not only inconsiderate, but ridiculous. In this imposing garb of caution and prudence, their opinion appeared so plausible, and was so warmly supported by Ferdinand, that Isabella declined giving any countenance to Columbus, and abruptly broke off the negociation with him which she had begun.

This was more mortifying to Columbus than all the disappointments which he had hitherto met with. The invitation to court from Isabella, like an unexpected ray of light, had opened such prospects of success, as encouraged him to hope that his labours were at an end; but now darkness and uncertainty returned, and his mind, firm as it was, could hardly support the shock of such an unforeseen reverse. He withdrew in deep anguish from court, with an intention of prosecuting his voyage to England, as his last resource.

About that time Granada surrendered, and Ferdinand and Isabella, in triumphal pomp, took possession of a city (Jan. 2, 1492), the reduction of which extirpated a foreign power from the heart of their dominions, and rendered them masters of all the provinces, extending from the bottom of the Pyrenees to the frontiers of Portugal. As the flow of spirits which accompanies success elevates the mind, and renders it enterprising, Quintanilla and Santangel, the vigilant and discerning patrons of Columbus, took advantage of this favourable situation, in order to make one effort more in behalf of their friend. They

addressed themselves to Isabella, and after expressing some surprise, that she, who had always been the munificent patroness of generous undertakings, should hesitate so long to countenance the most splendid scheme that had ever been proposed to any monarch; they represented to her, that Columbus was a man of a sound understanding and virtuous character, well qualified, by his experience in navigation, as well as his knowledge of geometry, to form just ideas with respect to the structure of the globe and the situation of its various regions; that, by offering to risk his own life and fortune in the execution of his scheme, he gave the most satisfying evidence both of his integrity and hope of success; that the sum requisite for equipping such an armament as he demanded was inconsiderable, and the advantages which might accrue from his undertaking were immense; that he demanded no recompence for his invention and labour, but what was to arise from the countries which he should discover; that, as it was worthy of her magnanimity to make this noble attempt to extend the sphere of human knowledge, and to open an intercourse with regions hitherto unknown, so it would afford the highest satisfaction to her piety and zeal, after re-establishing the Christian faith in those provinces of Spain from which it had been long banished, to discover a new world, to which she might communicate the light and blessings of divine truth; that if now she did not decide instantly, the opportunity would be irretrievably lost; that Columbus was on his way to foreign countries, where some prince more fortunate or adventurous, would close with his proposals, and Spain would for ever bewail the fatal timidity which had excluded her from the glory and advantages that she had once in power to have enjoyed.

These forcible arguments, urged by persons of such authority, and at a juncture so well chosen, produced



the desired effect. They dispelled all Isabella's doubts and fears ; she ordered Columbus to be instantly recalled, declared her resolution of employing him on his own terms, and regretting the low state of her finances, generously offered to pledge her own jewels, in order to raise as much money as might be needed in making preparations for the voyage. Santangel, in a transport of gratitude, kissed the queen's hand, and in order to save her from having recourse to such a mortifying expedient for procuring money, engaged to advance immediately the sum that was requisite [o].

Columbus had proceeded some leagues on his journey, when the messenger from Isabella overtook him. Upon receiving an account of the unexpected revolution in his favour, he returned directly to Santa Fé, though some remainder of diffidence still mingled itself with his joy. But the cordial reception which he met with from Isabella, together with the near prospect of setting out upon that voyage which had so long been the object of his thoughts and wishes, soon effaced the remembrance of all that he had suffered in Spain, during eight tedious years of solicitation and suspense. The negociation now went forward with facility and dispatch, and a treaty or capitulation with Columbus was signed on the seventeenth of April, one thousand four hundred and ninety-two. The chief articles of it were, 1. Ferdinand and Isabella, as sovereigns of the ocean, constituted Columbus their high admiral in all the seas, islands, and continents, which should be discovered by his industry ; and stipulated, that he and his heirs for ever should enjoy this office, with the same powers and prerogatives which belonged to the high admiral of Castile, within the limits of his jurisdiction. 2. They appointed Columbus their viceroy in all the islands and continents which he

[o] Herrera, dec. 1. lib. i. c. 8.



should discover ; but if, for the better administration of affairs, it should hereafter be necessary to establish a separate governor in any of those countries, they authorised Columbus to name three persons, of whom they should choose one for that office ; and the dignity of viceroy, with all its immunities, was likewise to be hereditary in the family of Columbus. 3. They granted to Columbus and his heirs for ever, the tenth of the free profits accruing from the productions and commerce of the countries which he should discover. 4. They declared, that if any controversy or law-suit should arise with respect to any mercantile transaction in the countries which should be discovered, it should be determined by the sole authority of Columbus, or of judges to be appointed by him. 5. They permitted Columbus to advance one-eighth part of what should be expended in preparing for the expedition, and in carrying on commerce with the countries which he should discover, and entitled him in return, to an eighth part of the profit [p].

Though the name of Ferdinand appears conjoined with that of Isabella in this transaction, his distrust of Columbus was still so violent that he refused to take any part in the enterprise as king of Aragon. As the whole expence of the expedition was to be defrayed by the crown of Castile, Isabella reserved for her subjects of that kingdom an exclusive right to all the benefits which might redound from its success.

As soon as the treaty was signed, Isabella, by her attention and activity, in forwarding the preparations for the voyage, endeavoured to make some reparation to Columbus for the time which he had lost in fruitless solicitation. By the twelfth of May, all that depended upon her was adjusted ; and Columbus waited on the king and queen, in order to re-

[p] Life of Columbus, c. 15. Herrera, dec. 1. lib. i. c. 9.

ceive their final instructions. Every thing respecting the destination and conduct of the voyage, they committed implicitly to the disposal of his prudence. But that they might avoid giving any just cause of offence to the king of Portugal, they strictly enjoined him not to approach near to the Portuguese settlements on the coast of Guinea, or in any of the other countries to which the Portuguese claimed right as discoverers. Isabella had ordered the ships of which Columbus was to take the command, to be fitted out in the port of Palos, a small maritime town in the province of Andalusia. As the guardian Juan Perez, to whom Columbus had already been so much indebted, resided in the neighbourhood of this place, he, by the influence of that good ecclesiastic, as well as by his own connection with the inhabitants, not only raised among them what he wanted of the sum that he was bound by treaty to advance, but engaged several of them to accompany him in the voyage. The chief of these associates was three brothers of the name of Pinzon, of considerable wealth, and of great experience in naval affairs, who were willing to hazard their lives and fortunes in the expedition.

But, after all the efforts of Isabella and Columbus, the armament was not suitable, either to the dignity of the nation by which it was equipped, or to the importance of the service for which it was destined. It consisted of three vessels. The largest, a ship of no considerable burden, was commanded by Columbus, as admiral, who gave it the name of *Santa Maria*, out of respect for the Blessed Virgin, whom he honoured with singular devotion. Of the second, called the *Pinta*, Martin Pinzon was captain, and his brother Francis pilot. The third, named the *Nigna*, was under the command of Vincent Yanez Pinzon. These two were light vessels, hardly superior in burden or force to large boats. This squadron, if it merits that name, was victualled for twelve months, and had on

board ninety men, mostly sailors, together with a few adventurers who followed the fortune of Columbus, and some gentlemen of Isabella's court, whom she appointed to accompany him. Though the expence of the undertaking was one of the circumstances which chiefly alarmed the court of Spain, and retarded so long the negociation with Columbus, the sum employed in fitting out this squadron did not exceed four thousand pounds.

As the art of ship-building in the fifteenth century was extremely rude, and the bulk of vessels was accommodated to the short and easy voyages along the coast which they were accustomed to perform, it is a proof of the courage as well as enterprising genius of Columbus, that he ventured, with a fleet so unfit for a distant navigation, to explore unknown seas, where he had no chart to guide him, no knowledge of the tides and currents, and no experience of the dangers to which he might be exposed. His eagerness to accomplish the great design which had so long engrossed his thoughts, made him overlook or disregard every circumstance that would have intimidated a mind less adventurous. He pushed forward the preparations with such ardour, and was seconded so effectually by the persons to whom Isabella committed the superintendence of this business, that every thing was soon in readiness for the voyage. But as Columbus was deeply impressed with sentiments of religion, he would not set out upon an expedition so arduous, and of which one great object was to extend the knowledge of the Christian faith, without imploring publicly the guidance and protection of Heaven. With this view, he, together with all the persons under his command, marched in solemn procession to the monastery of Rabida. After confessing their sins, and obtaining absolution, they received the holy sacrament from the hands of the guardian, who joined his prayers to theirs for the

success of an enterprize, which he had so zealously patronized.

Next morning, being Friday the third day of August, in the year one thousand four hundred and ninety-two, Columbus set sail, a little before sun-rise, in presence of a vast crowd of spectators who sent up their supplications to Heaven for the prosperous issue of the voyage, which they wished rather than expected. Columbus steered directly for the Canary Islands, and arrived there (August 13) without any occurrence that would have deserved notice on any other occasion. But, in a voyage of such expectation and importance, every circumstance was the object of attention. The rudder of the Pinta broke loose, the day after she left the harbour, and that accident alarmed the crew, no less superstitious than unskilful, as a certain omen of the unfortunate destiny of the expedition. Even in the short run to the Canaries, the ships were found to be so crazy and ill appointed, as to be very improper for a navigation which was expected to be both long and dangerous. Columbus refitted them, however, to the best of his power, and having supplied himself with fresh provisions, he took his departure from Gomera; one of the most westerly of the Canary Islands, on the sixth day of September.

Here the voyage of discovery may properly be said to begin ; for Columbus holding his course due west, left immediately the usual track of navigation, and stretched into unfrequented and unknown seas. The first day, as it was very calm, he made but little way ; but on the second, he lost sight of the Canaries ; and many of the sailors, dejected already and dismayed, when they contemplated the boldness of the undertaking, began to beat their breasts, and to shed tears, as if they were never more to behold land. Columbus comforted them with assurances of success, and the prospect of vast wealth, in those opulent regions

whither he was conducting them. This early discovery of the spirit of his followers taught Columbus; that he must prepare to struggle, not only with the unavoidable difficulties which might be expected from the nature of his undertaking, but with such as were likely to arise from the ignorance and timidity of the people under his command; and he perceived, that the art of governing the minds of men would be no less requisite for accomplishing the discoveries which he had in view, than naval skill and undaunted courage. Happily for himself, and for the country by which he was employed, he joined to the ardent temper and inventive genius of a projector, virtues of another species, which are rarely united with them. He possessed a thorough knowledge of mankind, an insinuating address, a patient perseverance in executing any plan, the perfect government of his own passions, and the talent of acquiring an ascendant over those of other men. All these qualities, which formed him for command, were accompanied with that superior knowledge of his profession, which begets confidence in times of difficulty and danger. To unskilful Spanish sailors, accustomed only to coasting voyages in the Mediterranean, the maritime science of Columbus, the fruit of thirty years experience, improved by an acquaintance with all the inventions of the Portuguese, appeared immense. As soon as they put to sea, he regulated every thing by his sole authority; he superintended the execution of every order; and allowing himself only a few hours for sleep, he was at all other times upon deck. As his course lay through seas which had not formerly been visited, the sounding-line, or instruments for observation, were continually in his hands. After the example of the Portuguese discoverers, he attended to the motion of tides and currents, watched the flight of birds, the appearance of fishes, of sea-weeds, and of every thing that floated

on the waves, and entered every occurrence, with a minute exactness, in the journal which he kept. As the length of the voyage could not fail of alarming sailors habituated only to short excursions, Columbus endeavoured to conceal from them the real progress which they made. With this view, though they run eighteen leagues on the second day after they left Gomera, he gave out that they had advanced only fifteen, and he uniformly employed the same artifice of reckoning short during the whole voyage. By the fourteenth of September, the fleet was above two hundred leagues to the west of the Canary Isles, at a greater distance from land than any Spaniard had been before that time. There they were struck with an appearance no less astonishing than new. They observed that the magnetic needle, in their compasses, did not point exactly to the polar star, but varied towards the west ; and as they proceeded, this variation increased. This appearance, which is now familiar, though it still remains one of the mysteries of nature, into the cause of which the sagacity of man hath not been able to penetrate, filled the companions of Columbus with terror. They were now in a boundless and unknown ocean, far from the usual course of navigation ; nature itself seemed to be altered, and the only guide which they had left was about to fail them. Columbus, with no less quickness than ingenuity, invented a reason for this appearance, which, though it did not satisfy himself, seemed so plausible to them, that it dispelled their fears, or silenced their murmurs.

He still continued to steer due west, nearly in the same latitude with the Canary Islands. In this course he came within the sphere of the trade wind, which blows invariably from east to west, between the tropics and a few degrees beyond them. He advanced before this steady gale with such uniform rapidity, that it was seldom necessary to shift a sail. When

about four hundred leagues to the west of the Canaries, he found the sea so covered with weeds, that it resembled a meadow of vast extent, and in some places they were so thick, as to retard the motion of the vessels. This strange appearance occasioned new alarm and disquiet. The sailors imagined that they were now arrived at the utmost boundary of the navigable ocean; that these floating weeds would obstruct their farther progress, and concealed dangerous rocks, or some large tract of land, which had sunk, they knew not how, in that place. Columbus endeavoured to persuade them, that what had alarmed, ought rather to have encouraged them, and was to be considered as a sign of approaching land. At the same time, a brisk gale arose, and carried them forward. Several birds were seen hovering about the ship [q], and directed their flight towards the west. The desponding crew resumed some degree of spirit, and began to entertain fresh hopes.

Upon the first of October they were, according to the admiral's reckoning, seven hundred and seventy leagues to the west of the Canaries; but lest his men should be intimidated by the prodigious length of the navigation, he gave out that they had proceeded only five hundred and eighty-four leagues; and, fortunately for Columbus, neither his own pilot, nor those of the other ships, had skill sufficient to correct this error, and discover the deceit. They had now been above three weeks at sea; they had proceeded far beyond what former navigators had attempted or deemed possible; all their prognostics of discovery, drawn from the flight of birds and other circumstances, had proved fallacious; the appearances of land, with which their own credulity or the artifice of their commander had from time to time flattered and amused them, had been altogether illusive, and their prospect of success seemed now to be as distant

[q] See NOTE XIII.



as ever. These reflections occurred often to men who had no other object or occupation, than to reason and discourse concerning the intention and circumstances of their expedition. They made impression, at first, upon the ignorant and timid, and extending, by degrees, to such as were better informed or more resolute, the contagion spread at length from ship to ship. From secret whispers or murmurings, they proceeded to open cabals and public complaints. They taxed their sovereign with inconsiderate credulity, in paying such regard to the vain promises and rash conjectures of an indigent foreigner, as to hazard the lives of so many of her own subjects, in prosecuting a chimerical scheme. They affirmed that they had fully performed their duty by venturing so far in an unknown and hopeless course, and could incur no blame, for refusing to follow, any longer, a desperate adventurer to certain destruction. They contended, that it was necessary to think of returning to Spain, while their crazy vessels were still in a condition to keep the sea, but expressed their fears that the attempt would prove vain, as the wind which had hitherto been so favourable to their course, must render it impossible to sail in the opposite direction. All agreed that Columbus should be compelled by force to adopt a measure on which their common safety depended. Some of the more audacious proposed, as the more expeditious and certain method for getting rid at once of his remonstrances, to throw him into the sea, being persuaded that, upon their return to Spain, the death of an unsuccessful projector would excite little concern, and be inquired into with no curiosity.

Columbus was fully sensible of his perilous situation. He had observed with great uneasiness, the fatal operations of ignorance and of fear in producing disaffection among his crew, and saw that it was now ready to burst out into open mutiny. He retained,



however, perfect presence of mind. He affected to seem ignorant of their machinations. Notwithstanding the agitation and solicitude of his own mind, he appeared with a cheerful countenance, like a man satisfied with the progress he had made, and confident of success. Sometimes he employed all the arts of insinuation, to sooth his men. Sometimes he endeavoured to work upon their ambition or avarice, by magnificent descriptions of the fame and wealth, which they were about to acquire. On other occasions, he assumed a tone of authority, and threatened them with vengeance from their sovereign, if, by their dastardly behaviour, they should defeat this noble effort to promote the glory of God, and to exalt the Spanish name above that of every other nation. Even with seditious sailors, the words of a man whom they had been accustomed to reverence, were weighty and persuasive, and not only restrained them from those violent excesses, which they meditated, but prevailed with them to accompany their admiral for some time longer.

As they proceeded, the indications of approaching land seemed to be more certain, and excited hope in proportion. The birds began to appear in flocks, making towards the south-west. Columbus, in imitation of the Portuguese navigators, who had been guided, in several of their discoveries, by the motion of birds, altered his course from due west towards that quarter whether they pointed their flight. But, after holding on for several days in this new direction, without any better success than formerly, having seen no object, during thirty days, but the sea and the sky, the hopes of his companions subsided faster than they had risen; their fears revived with additional force; impatience, rage, and despair, appeared in every countenance. All sense of subordination was lost; the officers, who had hitherto concurred with Columbus in opinion, and supported his autho-

rity, now took part with the private men ; they assembled tumultuously on the deck, expostulated with their commander, mingled threats with their expostulations, and required him instantly to tack about and to return to Europe. Columbus perceived that it would be of no avail to have recourse to any of his former arts, which having being tried so often, had lost their effect ; and that it was impossible to rekindle any zeal for the success of the expedition among men, in whose breasts fear had extinguished every generous sentiment. He saw that it was no less vain to think of employing either gentle or severe measures to quell a mutiny so general and so violent. It was necessary, on all these accounts, to sooth passions which he could no longer command, and to give way to a torrent too impetuous to be checked. He promised solemnly to his men that he would comply with their request, provided they would accompany him, and obey his commands for three days longer, and if, during that time, land were not discovered, he would then abandon the enterprize and direct his course towards Spain [r].

Enraged as the sailors were, and impatient to turn their faces again towards their native country, this proposition did not appear to them unreasonable. Nor did Columbus hazard much in confining himself to a term so short. The presages of discovering land were now so numerous and promising, that he deemed them infallible. For some days the sounding-line reached the bottom, and the soil which it brought up indicated land to be at no great distance. The flocks of birds increased, and were composed not only of sea-fowl, but of such land birds as could not be supposed to fly far from the shore. The crew of the *Pinta* observed a cane floating, which seemed to have been newly cut, and likewise a piece of timber artificially carved. The sailors aboard the *Nigua*

[r] Oviedo Hist. ap. Ramus. vol. iii. p. 81. E.

took up the branch of a tree with red berries, perfectly fresh. The clouds around the setting-sun assumed a new appearance ; the air was more mild and warm, and, during night, the wind became unequal and variable. From all these symptoms, Columbus, was so confident of being near land, that on the evening of the eleventh of October, after public prayers for success, he ordered the sails to be furled, and the ships to lie-to, keeping strict watch, lest they should be driven ashore in the night. During this interval of suspense and expectation, no man shut his eyes, all kept upon deck, gazing intently towards that quarter where they expected to discover the land, which had been so long the object of their wishes.

About two hours before midnight, Columbus standing on the forecastle, observed a light at a distance, and privately pointed it out to Pedro Gutierrez, a page of the queen's wardrobe. Gutierrez perceived it, and calling to Salcedo, comptroller of the fleet, all three saw it in motion, as if it were carried from place to place. A little after midnight the joyful sound of *land, land*, was heard from the Pinta, which kept always ahead of the other ships. But, having been so often deceived by fallacious appearances, every man was now become slow of belief, and waited, in all the anguish of uncertainty and impatience, for the return of day. As soon as morning dawned (Friday, Oct. 12), all doubts and fears were dispelled. From every ship an island was seen about two leagues to the north, whose flat and verdant fields, well stored with wood, and watered with many rivulets, presented the aspect of a delightful country. The crew of the Pinta instantly began the *Te Deum*, as a hymn of thanksgiving to God, and were joined by those of the other ships, with tears of joy and transports of congratulation. This office of gratitude to Heaven was followed by an act of justice to their

commander. They threw themselves at the feet of Columbus, with feelings of self-condemnation mingled with reverence. They implored him to pardon their ignorance, incredulity, and insolence, which had created him so much unnecessary disquiet, and had so often obstructed the prosecution of his well concerted plan ; and passing, in the warmth of their admiration, from one extreme to another, they now pronounced the man, whom they had so lately reviled and threatened, to be a person inspired by Heaven with sagacity and fortitude more than human, in order to accomplish a design so far beyond the ideas and conception of all former ages.

As soon as the sun arose, all their boats were manned and armed. They rowed towards the island with their colours displayed, with warlike music, and other martial pomp. As they approached the coast, they saw it covered with a multitude of people, whom the novelty of the spectacle had drawn together, whose attitudes and gestures expressed wonder and astonishment at the strange objects which presented themselves to their view. Columbus was the first European who set foot in the New World which he had discovered. He landed in a rich dress, and with a naked sword in his hand. His men followed and kneeling down, they all kissed the ground which they had so long desired to see. They next erected a crucifix, and prostrating themselves before it, returned thanks to God for conducting their voyage to such an happy issue. They then took solemn possession of the country for the crown of Castile and Leon, with all the formalities which the Portuguese were accustomed to observe in acts of this kind, in their new discoveries [s].

The Spaniards, while thus employed, were surrounded by many of the natives, who gazed, in silent admiration, upon actions which they could not

[s] *Life of Columbus*, c. 22, 23. *Herrera*, dec. I. lib. i. c. 13.

comprehend, and of which they did not foresee the consequences. The dress of the Spaniards, the whiteness of their skins, their beards, their arms, appeared strange and surprising. The vast machines in which they had traversed the ocean, that seemed to move upon the waters with wings, and uttered a dreadful sound resembling thunder, accompanied with lightning and smoke, struck them with such terror, that they began to respect their new guests as a superior order of beings, and concluded that they were children of the Sun, who had descended to visit the earth.

The Europeans were hardly less amazed at the scene now before them. Every herb, and shrub, and tree, was different from those which flourished in Europe. The soil seemed to be rich, but bore few marks of cultivation. The climate, even to the Spaniards, felt warm, though extremely delightful. The inhabitants appeared in the simple innocence of nature, entirely naked. Their black hair, long and uncurled, floated upon their shoulders, or was bound in tresses around their heads. They had no beards, and every part of their bodies was perfectly smooth. Their complexion was of a dusky copper colour, their features singular, rather than disagreeable, their aspect gentle and timid. Though not tall, they were well shaped, and active. Their faces, and several parts of their body, were fantastically painted with glaring colours. They were shy at first through fear, but soon became familiar with the Spaniards, and with transports of joy received from them hawk-bells, glass beads, or other baubles, in return for which they gave such provisions as they had, and some cotton yarn, the only commodity of value that they could produce. Towards evening, Columbus returned to his ship, accompanied by many of the islanders in their boats, which they called *canoes*, and though rudely formed out of the trunk of a

single tree, they rowed them with surprising dexterity. Thus, in the first interview between the inhabitants of the old and new worlds, every thing was conducted amicably, and to their mutual satisfaction. The former, enlightened and ambitious, formed already vast ideas with respect to the advantages which they might derive from the regions that began to open to their view. The latter, simple and undiscerning, had no foresight of the calamities and desolation which were approaching their country.

Columbus, who now assumed the title and authority of admiral and viceroy, called the island which he had discovered *San Salvador*. It is better known by the name of *Guanahani*, which the natives gave to it, and is one of that large cluster of islands called the Lucaya or Bahama isles. It is situated about three thousand miles to the west of Gomera, from which the squadron took its departure, and only four degrees to the south of it; so little had Columbus deviated from the westerly course, which he had chosen as the most proper.

Columbus employed the next day in visiting the coasts of the island; and from the universal poverty of the inhabitants, he perceived that this was not the rich country for which he sought. But, conformably to his theory concerning the discovery of those regions of Asia, which stretched towards the east, he concluded that San Salvador was one of the isles which geographers described as situated in the great ocean adjacent to India [*t*]. Having observed, that most of the people whom he had seen wore small plates of gold, by way of ornament, in their nostrils, he eagerly inquired where they got that precious metal. They pointed towards the south, and made him comprehend by signs, that gold abounded in countries situated in that quarter. Thither he immediately determined to direct his course, in full con-

[*t*] Pet. Mart. epist. 135.

fidence of finding there those opulent regions which had been the object of his voyage, and would be a recompence for all his toils and dangers. He took along with him seven of the natives of San Salvador, that, by acquiring the Spanish language, they might serve as guides and interpreters ; and those innocent people considered it as a mark of distinction when they were selected to accompany him.

He saw several islands, and touched at three of the largest, on which he bestowed the names of St. Mary of the Conception, Fernandina, and Isabella. But as their soil, productions, and inhabitants, nearly resembled those of San Salvador, he made no stay in any of them. He inquired every where for gold, and the signs that were uniformly made by way of answer, confirmed him in the opinion that it was brought from the south. He followed that course, and soon discovered a country which appeared very extensive, not perfectly level, like those which he had already visited, but so diversified with rising grounds, hills, rivers, woods, and plains, that he was uncertain whether it might prove an island, or part of the continent. The natives of San Salvador, whom he had on board, called it *Cuba* ; Columbus gave it the name of Juanna. He entered the mouth of a large river ; with his squadron, and all the inhabitants fled to the mountains as he approached the shore. But as he resolved to careen his ships in that place, he sent some Spaniards, together with one of the people of San Salvador, to view the interior part of the country. They, having advanced above sixty miles from the shore, reported, upon their return, that the soil was richer and more cultivated than any they had hitherto discovered ; that, besides many scattered cottages, they had found one village, containing above a thousand inhabitants ; that the people, though naked, seemed to be more intelligent than those of San Salvador, but had treated them



with the same respectful attention, kissing their feet, and honouring them as sacred beings allied to Heaven ; that they had given them to eat a certain root; the taste of which resembled roasted chesnuts, and likewise a singular species of corn called *maize*, which, either when roasted whole or ground into meal, was abundantly palatable ; that there seemed to be no four-footed animals in the country, but a species of dogs, which could not bark, and a creature resembling a rabbit, but of a much smaller size ; that they had observed some ornaments of gold among the people, but of no great value [*u*].

These messengers had prevailed with some of the natives to accompany them, who informed Columbus, that the gold of which they made their ornaments was found in *Cubanacan*. By this word they meant the middle or inland part of Cuba ; but Columbus, being ignorant of their language, as well as unaccustomed to their pronunciation, and his thoughts running continually upon his own theory concerning the discovery of the East Indies, he was led, by the resemblance of sound, to suppose that they spoke of the Great Khan, and imagined that the opulent kingdom of *Cathay*, described by Marco Polo, was not very remote. This induced him to employ some time in viewing the country. He visited almost every harbour, from Porto del Principe, on the north coast of Cuba, to the eastern extremity of the island : but, though delighted with the beauty of the scenes, which every where presented themselves, and amazed at the luxuriant fertility of the soil, both which, from their novelty, made a more lively impression upon his imagination [*x*], he did not find gold in such quantity as was sufficient to satisfy either the avarice of his followers, or the expectations of

[*u*] Life of Columbus, c. 24—28. Herrera, dec. I. lib. i. c. 14.

[*x*] See Note XIV.



the court to which he was to return. The people of the country, as much astonished at his eagerness in quest of gold, as the Europeans were at their ignorance and simplicity, pointed towards the east, where an island which they called Hayti was situated, in which that metal was more abundant than among them. Columbus ordered his squadron to bend its course thither; but Martin Alonso Pinzon, impatient to be the first who should take possession of the treasures which this country was supposed to contain, quitted his companions, regardless of all the admiral's signals to slacken sail until they should come up with him.

Columbus, retarded by contrary winds, did not reach Hayti till the sixth of December. He called the port where he first touched St. Nicholas, and the island itself Espagnola, in honour of the kingdom by which he was employed; and it is the only country, of those he had yet discovered, which has retained the name that he gave it. As he could neither meet with the Pinta, nor have any intercourse with the inhabitants, who fled in great consternation towards the woods, he soon quitted St. Nicholas, and sailing along the northern coast of the island, he entered another harbour, which he called Conception. Here he was more fortunate; his people overtook a woman who was flying from them, and after treating her with great gentleness, dismissed her with a present of such toys as they knew were most valued in those regions. The description which she gave to her countrymen of the humanity and wonderful qualities of the strangers; their admiration of the trinkets, which she shewed with exultation; and their eagerness to participate of the same favours; removed all their fears, and induced many of them to repair to the harbour. The strange objects which they beheld, and the baubles, which Columbus bestowed upon them, amply gratified their curiosity and their wishes. They nearly resembled the people of

Juanahani and Cuba. They were naked like them, ignorant, and simple; and seemed to be equally unacquainted with all the arts which appear most necessary in polished societies: but they were gentle, redulous, and timid, to a degree which rendered it easy to acquire the ascendant over them, especially as their excessive admiration led them into the same error with the people of the other islands, in believing the Spaniards to be more than mortals, and descended immediately from Heaven. They possessed gold in greater abundance than their neighbours, which they readily exchanged for bells, beads, or pins; and in this unequal traffic both parties were highly pleased, each considering themselves as gainers by the transaction. Here Columbus was visited by a prince or *caxique* of the country. He appeared with all the pomp known among a simple people, being carried in sort of palanquin upon the shoulders of four men, and attended by many of his subjects, who served him with great respect. His deportment was grave and stately, very reserved towards his own people, but with Columbus and the Spaniards extremely courteous. He gave the admiral some thin plates of gold, and a girdle of curious workmanship, receiving in return presents of small value, but highly acceptable to him [y].

Columbus, still intent on discovering the mines which yielded gold, continued to interrogate all the natives with whom he had any intercourse concerning their situation. They concurred in pointing out a mountainous country, which they called *Cibao*, at some distance from the sea, and farther towards the east. Struck with this sound, which appeared to him the same with *Cipango*, the name by which Marco Polo, and other travellers to the east, distinguished the island of Japan, he no longer doubted

[y] Life of Columbus, c. 32. Herrera, dec. 1. lib. i. c. 15, &c.

with respect to the vicinity of the countries which he had discovered to the remote parts of Asia ; and, in full expectation of reaching soon those regions which had been the object of his voyage, he directed his course towards the east. He put into a commodious harbour, which he called St. Thomas, and found that district to be under the government of a powerful cazique, named *Guacanahari*, who, as he afterwards learned, was one of the five sovereigns among whom the whole island was divided. He immediately sent messengers to Columbus, who, in his name, delivered to him the present of a mask curiously fashioned, with the ears, nose, and mouth of beaten gold, and invited him to the place of his residence, near the harbour now called Cape Francois, some leagues towards the east. Columbus dispatched some of his officers to visit this prince, who, as he behaved himself with greater dignity, seemed to claim more attention. They returned, with such favourable accounts both of the country and of the people, as made Columbus impatient for that interview with *Guacanahari* to which he had been invited.

He sailed for this purpose from St. Thomas, on the twenty-fourth of December, with a fair wind, and the sea perfectly calm ; and as, amidst the multiplicity of his occupations, he had not shut his eyes for two days, he retired at midnight, in order to take some repose, having committed the helm to the pilot, with strict injunctions not to quit it for a moment. The pilot, dreading no danger, carelessly left the helm to an unexperienced cabin-boy, and the ship, carried away by a current, was dashed against a rock. The violence of the shock awakened Columbus. He ran up to the deck. There, all was confusion and despair. He alone retained presence of mind. He ordered some of the sailors to take a boat, and carry out an anchor eastern ; but, instead of obeying, they made off towards the *Nigna*, which was about

half a league distant. He then commanded the masts to be cut down, in order to lighten the ship ; but all his endeavours were too late ; the vessel opened near the keel, and filled so fast with water that its loss was inevitable. The smoothness of the sea, and the timely assistance of boats from the Nigna, enabled the crew to save their lives. As soon as the islanders heard of this disaster, they crowded to the shore, with their prince Guacanahari at their head. Instead of taking advantage of the distress in which they beheld the Spaniards, to attempt any thing to their detriment, they lamented their misfortune with tears of sincere condolence. Not satisfied with this unavailing expression of their sympathy, they put to sea a number of canoes, and, under the direction of the Spaniards, assisted in saving whatever could be got out of the wreck ; and by the united labour of so many hands, almost every thing of value was carried ashore. As fast as the goods were landed, Guacanahari in person took charge of them. By his orders they were all deposited in one place, and armed centinels were posted, who kept the multitude at a distance, in order to prevent them not only from embezzling, but from inspecting too curiously what belonged to their guests [z]. Next morning this prince visited Columbus, who was now on board the Nigna, and endeavoured to console him for his loss, by offering all that he possessed to repair it [a].

The condition of Columbus was such that he stood in need of consolation. He had hitherto procured no intelligence of the Pinta, and no longer doubted but that his treacherous associate had set sail for Europe, in order to have the merit of carrying the first tidings of the extraordinary discoveries which had been made, and to pre-occupy so far the ear of their sovereign, as to rob him of the glory and reward to which he was justly entitled. There re,

[z] See NOTE XV.

[a] Herrera, dec. 1. lib. i. c. 18.

mained but one vessel, and that the smallest and most crazy of the squadron, to traverse such a vast ocean, and carry so many men back to Europe. Each of those circumstances was alarming, and filled the mind of Columbus with the utmost solicitude. The desire of overtaking Pinzon, and of effacing the unfavourable impressions which his misrepresentations might make in Spain, made it necessary to return thither without delay. The difficulty of taking such a number of persons aboard the *Nigna*, confirmed him in an opinion, which the fertility of the country, and the gentle temper of the people, had already induced him to form. He resolved to leave a part of his crew in the island, that, by residing there, they might learn the language of the natives, study their disposition, examine the nature of the country, search for mines, prepare for the commodious settlement of the colony, with which he proposed to return, and thus secure and facilitate the acquisition of those advantages which he expected from his discoveries. When he mentioned this to his men, all approved of the design; and from impatience under the fatigue of a long voyage, from the levity natural to sailors, or from the hopes of amassing wealth in a country, which afforded such promising specimens of its riches, many offered voluntarily to be among the number of those who should remain.

Nothing was now wanting towards the execution of this scheme, but to obtain the consent of Guacanahari; and his unsuspecting simplicity soon presented to the admiral a favourable opportunity of proposing it. Columbus having, in the best manner he could, by broken words and signs, expressed some curiosity to know the cause which had moved the islanders to fly with such precipitation upon the approach of his ships, the cazique informed him that the country was much infested by the incursions of certain people whom he called *Carribeans*, who inhabited

several islands to the south-east. These he described as a fierce and warlike race of men, who delighted in blood, and devoured the flesh of the prisoners who were so unhappy as to fall into their hands; and as the Spaniards, at their first appearance, were supposed to be the Caribbeans, whom the natives, however numerous, durst not face in battle, they had recourse to their usual method of securing their safety, by flying into the thickest and most impenetrable woods. Guacanahari, while speaking of those dreadful invaders, discovered such symptoms of terror, as well as such consciousness of the inability of his own people to resist them, as led Columbus to conclude that he would not be alarmed at the proposition of any scheme, which afforded him the prospect of an additional security, against their attacks. He instantly offered him the assistance of the Spaniards to repel his enemies; he engaged to take him and his people under the protection of the powerful monarch whom he served, and offered to leave in the island such a number of his men as should be sufficient, not only to defend the inhabitants from future incursions, but to avenge their past wrongs.

The credulous prince closed eagerly with the proposal, and thought himself already safe under the patronage of beings sprung from Heaven, and superior in power to mortal man. The ground was marked out for a small fort, which Columbus called *Navidad*, because he had landed there on Christmas day. A deep ditch was drawn around it. The ramparts were fortified with pallisades, and the great guns, saved out of the admiral's ship, were planted upon them. In ten days the work was finished; that simple race of men labouring with inconsiderate assiduity in erecting this first monument of their own servitude. During this time, Columbus, by his caresses and liberality, laboured to increase the high

opinion which the natives entertained of the Spaniards. But while he endeavoured to inspire them with confidence in their disposition to do good, he wished likewise to give them some striking idea of their power to punish and destroy such as were the objects of their indignation. With this view, in presence of a vast assembly, he drew up his men in order of battle, and made an ostentatious but innocent display of the sharpness of the Spanish swords, of the force of their spears, and the operation of their cross bows. These rude people, strangers to the use of iron, and unacquainted with any hostile weapons, but arrows of reeds pointed with the bones of fishes, wooden swords, and javelins hardened in the fire, wondered and trembled. Before this surprise or fear had time to abate, he ordered the great guns to be fired. The sudden explosion struck them with such terror, that they fell flat to the ground, covering their faces with their hands; and when they beheld the astonishing effect of the bullets among the trees, towards which the cannon had been pointed, they concluded that it was impossible to resist men, who had the command of such destructive instruments, and who came armed with thunder and lightning against their enemies.

After giving such impressions both of the beneficence and power of the Spaniards, as might have rendered it easy to preserve an ascendant over the minds of the natives, Columbus appointed thirty-eight of his people to remain in the island. He entrusted the command of these to Diego de Arada, a gentleman of Cordova, investing him with the same powers which he himself had received from Ferdinand and Isabella; and furnished him with every thing requisite for the subsistence or defence of this infant colony. He strictly enjoined them to maintain concord among themselves, to yield an unreserved obedience to their commander, to avoid giving offence to the



natives by any violence or exaction, to cultivate the friendship of Guacanahari, but not to put themselves in his power, by straggling in small parties, or marching too far from the fort. He promised to revisit them soon, with such a reinforcement of strength as might enable them to take full possession of the country, and to reap all the fruits of their discoveries. In the mean time, he engaged to mention their names to the king and queen, and to place their merit and services in the most advantageous light [*b*].

1493.] Having thus taken every precaution for the security of the colony, he left Navidad on the fourth of January one thousand four hundred and ninety-three, and steering towards the east, discovered, and gave names to most of the harbours on the northern coast of the island. On the sixth, he descried the *Pinta*, and soon came up with her, after a separation of more than six weeks. Pinzon endeavoured to justify his conduct, by pretending that he had been driven from his course by stress of weather, and prevented from returning by contrary winds. The admiral, though he still suspected his perfidious intentions, and knew well what he urged in his own defence to be frivolous as well as false, was so sensible that this was not a proper time for venturing upon any high strain of authority, and felt such satisfaction in this junction with his consort, which delivered him from many disquieting apprehensions, that lame as Pinzon's apology was, he admitted of it without difficulty, and restored him to favour. During his absence from the admiral, Pinzon had visited several harbours in the island, had acquired some gold by trafficking with the natives, but had made no discovery of any importance.

From the condition of his ships, as well as the temper of his men, Columbus now found it necessary to

[*b*] Oviedo ap. Ram. iii. p. 82. E. Her. dec. I. lib. i. c. 20. Life of Columbus, c. 34.



hasten his return to Europe. The former, having suffered much during a voyage of such an unusual length, were extremely leaky. The latter expressed the utmost impatience to revisit their native country, from which they had been so long absent, and where they had things so wonderful and unheard-of to relate. Accordingly, on the sixteenth of January, he directed his course towards the north-east, and soon lost sight of land. He had on board some of the natives, whom he had taken from the different islands which he discovered; and besides the gold, which was the chief object of research, he had collected specimens of all the productions which were likely to become subjects of commerce in the several countries, as well as many unknown birds, and other natural curiosities, which might attract the attention of the learned, or excite the wonder of the people. The voyage was prosperous to the fourteenth of February, and he had advanced near five hundred leagues across the Atlantic ocean, when the wind began to rise, and continued to blow with increasing rage, which terminated in a furious hurricane. Every thing that the naval skill and experience of Columbus could devise was employed, in order to save the ships. But it was impossible to withstand the violence of the storm, and, as they were still far from any land, destruction seemed inevitable. The sailors had recourse to prayers to Almighty God, to the invocation of saints, to vows and charms, to every thing that religion dictates, or superstition suggests, to the affrighted mind of man. No prospect of deliverance appearing, they abandoned themselves to despair, and expected every moment to be swallowed up in the waves. Besides the passions which naturally agitate and alarm the human mind in such awful situations, when certain death, in one of his most terrible forms, is before it, Columbus had to endure feelings of distress peculiar to himself. He dreaded that all know-

ledge of the amazing discoveries which he had made was now to perish ; mankind were to be deprived of every benefit that might have been derived from the happy success of his schemes, and his own name would descend to posterity as that of a rash deluded adventurer, instead of being transmitted with the honour due to the author and conductor of the most noble enterprize that had ever been undertaken. These reflections extinguished all sense of his own personal danger. Less affected with the loss of life, than solicitous to preserve the memory of what he had attempted, and atchieved, he retired to his cabin, and wrote, upon parchment, a short account of the voyage which he had made, of the course which he had taken, of the situation and riches of the countries which he had discovered, and of the colony that he had left there. Having wrapped up this in an oiled cloth, which he inclosed in a cake of wax, he put it into a cask carefully stopped up, and threw it into the sea, in hopes that some fortunate accident might preserve a deposit of such importance to the world [c].

At length Providence interposed, to save a life reserved for other services. The wind abated, the sea became calm, and on the evening of the fifteenth, Columbus and his companions discovered land ; and though uncertain what it was, they made towards it. They soon knew it to be St. Mary, one of the Azores or western isles, subject to the crown of Portugal. There, after a violent contest with the governor, in which Columbus displayed no less spirit than prudence, he obtained a supply of fresh provisions, and whatever else he needed. One circumstance, however, greatly disquieted him. The *Pinta*, of which he had lost sight on the first day of the hurricane, did not appear ; he dreaded for some time that she had

[c] Life of Columbus, c. 37. Herrera, dec. 1. lib. ii. c. 1, 2.  
&c NOTE XVI.

foundered at sea, and that all her crew had perished ; afterwards, his former suspicions recurred, and he became apprehensive that Pinzon had borne away for Spain, that he might reach it before him, and by giving the first account of his discoveries, might obtain some share of his fame.

In order to prevent this, he left the Azores as soon as the weather would permit (Feb. 24). At no great distance from the coast of Spain, when near the end of his voyage, and seemingly beyond the reach of any disaster, another storm arose, little inferior to the former in violence ; and after driving before it during two days and two nights, he was forced to take shelter in the river Tagus (March 4). Upon application to the king of Portugal, he was allowed to come up to Lisbon ; and, notwithstanding the envy which it was natural for the Portuguese to feel, when they beheld another nation entering upon that province of discovery which they had hitherto deemed peculiarly their own, and in its first essay, not only rivalling, but eclipsing their fame, Columbus was received with all the marks of distinction due to a man who had performed things so extraordinary and unexpected. The king admitted him into his presence, treated him with the highest respect, and listened to the account which he gave of his voyage with admiration mingled with regret. While Columbus, on his part, enjoyed the satisfaction of describing the importance of his discoveries, and of being now able to prove the solidity of his schemes to those very persons, who, with an ignorance disgraceful to themselves, and fatal to their country, had lately rejected them as the projects of a visionary or designing adventurer [d].

Columbus was so impatient to return to Spain, that he remained only five days in Lisbon. On the

[d] Life of Columbus, c. 40, 41. Herrera, dec. 1. lib. ii. c. 3.

fifteenth of March he arrived in the port of Palos, seven months and eleven days from the time when he set out thence upon his voyage. As soon as the ship was discovered approaching the port, all the inhabitants of Palos ran eagerly to the shore, in order to welcome their relations and fellow-citizens, and to hear tidings of their voyage. When the prosperous issue of it was known, when they beheld the strange people, the unknown animals, and singular productions brought from the countries which had been discovered, the effusion of joy was general and unbounded. The bells were rung, the cannon fired; Columbus was received at landing with royal honours, and all the people, in solemn procession, accompanied him and his crew to the church, where they returned thanks to Heaven, which had so wonderfully conducted and crowned with success, a voyage of greater length and of more importance than had been attempted in any former age. On the evening of the same day, he had the satisfaction of seeing the Pinta, which the violence of the tempest had driven far to the north, enter the harbour.

The first care of Columbus was to inform the king and queen, who were then at Barcelona, of his arrival and success. Ferdinand and Isabella, no less astonished than delighted with this unexpected event, desired Columbus, in terms the most respectful and flattering, to repair immediately to court, that from his own mouth they might receive a full detail of his extraordinary services and discoveries. During his journey to Barcelona, the people crowded from the adjacent country, following him every where with admiration and applause. His entrance into the city was conducted, by order of Ferdinand and Isabella, with pomp suitable to the great event, which added such distinguishing lustre to their reign. The people whom he brought along with him from the countries which he had discovered, marched first, and by their

singular complexion, the wild peculiarity of their features, and uncouth finery, appeared like men of another species. Next to them were carried the ornaments of gold fashioned by the rude art of the natives, the grains of gold found in the mountains, and dust of the same metal gathered in the rivers. After these, appeared the various commodities of the new-discovered countries, together with their curious productions. Columbus himself closed the procession, and attracted the eyes of all the spectators, who gazed with admiration on the extraordinary man, whose superior sagacity and fortitude had conducted their countrymen, by a route concealed from past ages, to the knowledge of a new world. Ferdinand and Isabella received him clad in their royal robes, and seated upon a throne, under a magnificent canopy. When he approached, they stood up, and raising him as he kneeled to kiss their hands, commanded him to take his seat upon a chair prepared for him, and to give a circumstantial account of his voyage. He delivered it with a gravity and composure no less suitable to the disposition of the Spanish nation, than to the dignity of the audience in which he spoke, and with that modest simplicity which characterises men of superior minds, who, satisfied with having performed great actions, court not vain applause by an ostentatious display of their exploits. When he had finished his narration, the king and queen, kneeling down, offered up solemn thanks to Almighty God for the discovery of those new regions, from which they expected so many advantages to flow in upon the kingdoms subject to their government [*e*]. Every mark of honour that gratitude or admiration could suggest was conferred upon Columbus. Letters patent were issued, confirming to him and to his heirs all the privileges contained in the capitulation concluded at St. Fé; his family was ennobled; the king and queen,

[*e*] See NOTE XVII.

and after their example, the courtiers, treated him, on every occasion, with all the ceremonious respect paid to persons of the highest rank. But what pleased him most, as it gratified his active mind, bent continually upon great objects, was, an order to equip, without delay, an armament of such force, as might enable him not only to take possession of the countries which he had already discovered, but to go in search of those more opulent regions, which he still confidently expected to find [*f*].

While preparations were making for this expedition, the fame of Columbus' successful voyage spread over Europe, and excited general attention. The multitude, struck with amazement when they heard that a new world had been found, could hardly believe an event so much above their conception. Men of science, capable of comprehending the nature, and of discerning the effects of this great discovery, received the account of it with admiration and joy. They spoke of his voyage with rapture, and congratulated one another upon their felicity in having lived in the period when, by this extraordinary event, the boundaries of human knowledge were so much extended, and such a new field of inquiry and observation opened, as would lead mankind to a perfect acquaintance with the structure and productions of the habitable globe [*g*]. Various opinions and conjectures were formed concerning the new-found countries, and what division of the earth they belonged to. Columbus adhered tenaciously to his original opinion, that they should be reckoned a part of those vast regions in Asia, comprehended under the general name of India. This sentiment was confirmed by the observations which he made concerning the productions of the countries he had discovered. Gold was

[*f*] Life of Columbus, c. 42, 43. Herrera, dec. 1. lib. ii. c. 3.

[*g*] P. Mart. epist. 133, 134, 135. See NOTE XVIII,

known to abound in India, and he had met with such promising samples of it in the islands which he visited, as led him to believe that rich mines of it might be found. Cotton, another production of the East Indies, was common there. The pimento of the islands, he imagined to be a species of the East Indian pepper. He mistook a root, somewhat resembling rhubarb, for that valuable drug, which was then supposed to be a plant peculiar to the East Indies [*h*]. The birds brought home by him were adorned with the same rich plumage which distinguishes those of India. The alligator of the one country appeared to be the same with the crocodile of the other. After weighing all these circumstances, not only the Spaniards, but the other nations of Europe, seem to have adopted the opinion of Columbus. The countries which he had discovered were considered as a part of India. In consequence of this notion, the name of Indies is given to them by Ferdinand and Isabella, in a ratification of their former agreement, which was granted to Columbus upon his return [*i*]. Even after the error which gave rise to this opinion was detected, and the true position of the New World was ascertained, the name has remained, and the appellation of *West Indies* is given by all the people of Europe to the country, and that of *Indians* to its inhabitants.

The names by which Columbus distinguished the countries which he had discovered was so inviting, the specimens of their riches and fertility, which he produced, were so considerable, and the reports of his companions, delivered frequently with the exaggeration natural to travellers, so favourable as to excite a wonderful spirit of enterprize among the Spaniards. Though little accustomed to naval expeditions, they were impatient to set out upon

[*h*] Herrera, dec. 1. lib. i. c. 20. Gomara, Hist. c. 17.

[*i*] Life of Columbus, c. 44.



the voyage. Volunteers of every rank solicited to be employed. Allured by the inviting prospects which opened to their ambition and avarice, neither the length nor danger of the navigation intimidated them. Cautious as Ferdinand was, and averse to every thing new or adventurous, he seems to have caught the same spirit with his subjects. Under its influence, preparations for a second expedition were carried on with a rapidity unusual in Spain, and to an extent that would be deemed not inconsiderable in the present age. The fleet consisted of seventeen ships, some of which were of good burden. It had on board fifteen hundred persons, among whom were many of noble families, who had served in honourable stations. The greater part of these being destined to remain in the country, were furnished with every thing requisite for conquest or settlement, with all kinds of European domestic animals, with such seeds and plants as were most likely to thrive in the climate of the West Indies, with utensils and instruments of every sort, and with such artificers as might be most useful in an infant colony [k].

But, formidable and well-provided as this fleet was, Ferdinand and Isabella did not rest their title to the possession of the newly-discovered countries upon its operations alone. The example of the Portuguese, as well as the superstition of the age, made it necessary to obtain from the Roman pontiff a grant of those territories which they wished to occupy. The pope, as the vicar and representative of Jesus Christ, was supposed to have a right of dominion over all the kingdoms of the earth. Alexander VI. a pontiff infamous for every crime which disgraces humanity, filled the papal throne at that time. As he was born Ferdinand's subject, and very solicitous to secure the protection of Spain, in order to facilitate the execution of his ambitious schemes

[k] Herrera, dec. 1. lib. ii. c. 5. Life of Columbus, c. 45.



in favour of his own family, he was extremely willing to gratify the Spanish monarchs. By an act of liberality which cost him nothing, and that served to establish the jurisdiction and pretensions of the papal see, he granted in full right to Ferdinand and Isabella all the countries inhabited by Infidels, which they had discovered, or should discover ; and, in virtue of that power which he derived from Jesus Christ, he conferred on the crown of Castile vast regions, to the possession of which he himself was so far from having any title, that he was unacquainted with their situation, and ignorant even of their existence. As it was necessary to prevent this grant from interfering with that formerly made to the crown of Portugal, he appointed that a line, supposed to be drawn from pole to pole, a hundred leagues to the westward of the Azores, should serve as a limit between them ; and, in the plenitude of his power, bestowed all to the east of this imaginary line upon the Portuguese, and all to the west of it, upon the Spaniards [*m*]. Zeal for propagating the Christian faith was the consideration employed by Ferdinand in soliciting this bull, and is mentioned by Alexander as his chief motive for issuing it. In order to manifest some concern for this laudable object, several friars, under the direction of father Boyl, a Catalonian monk of great reputation, as apostolical vicar, were appointed to accompany Columbus, and to devote themselves to the instruction of the natives. The Indians, whom Columbus had brought along with him, having received some tincture of Christian knowledge, were baptized with much solemnity, the king himself, the prince his son, and the chief persons of his court, standing as their god-fathers. Those first fruits of the New World have not been followed by such an increase as pious men wished, and had reason to expect.

[*m*] Herrera, dec. 1. lib. ii. c. 4. Torquemedas Mon. Ind. lib. xviii. c. 3.

Ferdinand and Isabella having thus acquired a title, which was then deemed completely valid, to extend their discoveries and to establish their dominion over such a considerable portion of the globe, nothing now retarded the departure of the fleet. Columbus was extremely impatient to revisit the colony which he had left, and to pursue that career of glory upon which he had entered. He set sail from the bay of Cadiz on the twenty-fifth of September, and touching again at the island of Gomera, he steered farther toward the south than in his former voyage. By holding this course, he enjoyed more steadily the benefit of the regular winds, which reign within the tropics, and was carried towards a large cluster of islands, situated considerably to the east of those which he had already discovered. On the twenty-sixth day after his departure from Gomera (Nov. 2), he made land [n]. It was one of the Caribee or Leeward islands, to which he gave the name of Deseada, on account of the impatience of his crew to discover some part of the New World. After this he visited successively Dominica, Marigalante, Guadaloupe, Antigua, San Juan de Puerto Rico, and several other islands, scattered in his way as he advanced towards the north-west. All these he found to be inhabited by that fierce race of people whom Guacanahari had painted in such frightful colours. His descriptions appeared not to have been exaggerated. The Spaniards never attempted to land without meeting with such a reception as discovered the martial and daring spirit of the natives; and in their habitations were found relics of those horrid feasts which they had made upon the bodies of their enemies taken in war.

But as Columbus was eager to know the state of the colony which he had planted, and to supply it with the necessaries of which he supposed it to be in want, he made no stay in any of those islands, and

[n] Oviedo ap. Ramus. iii. 85, B.

proceeded directly to Hispaniola [*o*]. (Nov. 22). When he arrived off Navidad, the station in which he had left the thirty-eight men under the command of Arada, he was astonished that none of them appeared, and expected every moment to see them running with transports of joy to welcome their countrymen. Full of solicitude about their safety, and foreboding in his mind what had befallen them he rowed instantly to land. All the natives from whom he might have received information had fled. But the fort which he had built was entirely demolished, and the tattered garments, the broken arms and utensils scattered about it, left no room to doubt concerning the unhappy fate of the garrison [*p*]. While the Spaniards were shedding tears over those sad memorials of their fellow-citizens, a brother of the cazique Guacanahari arrived. From him Columbus received a particular detail of what had happened after his departure from the island. The familiar intercourse of the Indians with the Spaniards tended gradually to diminish the superstitious veneration with which their first appearance had inspired that simple people. By their own indiscretion and ill-conduct, the Spaniards speedily effaced those favourable impressions, and soon convinced the natives, that they had all the wants, and weaknesses, and passions of men. As soon as the powerful restraint which the presence and authority of Columbus imposed was withdrawn, the garrison threw off all regard for the officer whom he had invested with command. Regardless of the prudent instructions which he had given them, every man became independent, and gratified his desires without control. The gold, the women, the provisions of the natives, were all the prey of those licentious oppressors. They roamed in

[*o*] P. Martyr, dec. p. 15, 18. Herrera, dec. 1. lib. ii. c. 7. Life of Columbus, c. 46, &c.

[*p*] Hist. de Cura de los Palacios. MS.

small parties over the island, extending their rapacity and insolence to every corner of it. Gentle and timid as the people were, those unprovoked injuries at length exhausted their patience, and roused their courage. The cazique of Cibao, whose country the Spaniards chiefly infested on account of the gold which it contained, surprised and cut off several of them, while they straggled in as perfect security as if their conduct had been altogether inoffensive. He then assembled his subjects, and surrounding the fort, set it on fire. Some of the Spaniards were killed in defending it, the rest perished in attempting to make their escape by crossing an arm of the sea. Guacanahari, whom all their exactions had not alienated from the Spaniards, took arms in their behalf, and, in endeavouring to protect them, had received a wound, by which he was still confined [q].

Though this account was far from removing the suspicions which the Spaniards entertained with respect to the fidelity of Guacanahari, Columbus perceived so clearly that this was not a proper juncture for inquiring into his conduct with scrupulous accuracy, that he rejected the advice of several of his officers, who urged him to seize the person of that prince, and to revenge the death of their countrymen by attacking his subjects. He represented to them the necessity of securing the friendship of some potentate of the country, in order to facilitate the settlement which they intended, and the danger of driving the natives to unite in some desperate attempt against them by such an ill-timed and unavailing exercise of rigour. Instead of wasting his time, in punishing past wrongs, he took precautions for preventing any future injury. With this view he made choice of a situation more healthy and commodious than that of Navidad. He traced out the plan of a town

[q] P. Martyr, decad. p. 22, &c. Herrera, dec. 1. lib. ii. c. 7, 9. Life of Columbus, c. 49, 50.

in a large plain near a spacious bay, and obliging every person to put his hand to a work on which their common safety depended, the houses and ramparts were soon so far advanced by their united labour, as to afford them shelter and security. This rising city, the first that the Europeans founded in the New World, he named Isabella, in honour of his patroness the queen of Castile [*r*].

In carrying on this necessary work, Columbus had not only to sustain all the hardships, and to encounter all the difficulties, to which infant colonies are exposed when they settle in an uncultivated country, but he had to contend with what was more insuperable, the laziness, the impatience, and mutinous disposition of his followers. By the enervating influence of a hot climate, the natural inactivity of the Spaniards seemed to increase. Many of them were gentlemen, unaccustomed to the fatigue of bodily labour, and all had engaged in the enterprize with the sanguine hopes excited by the splendid and exaggerated description of their countrymen who returned from the first voyage, or by the mistaken opinion of Columbus, that the country which he had discovered was either the Cipango of Marco Polo, or the Ophir [*s*], from which Solomon imported those precious commodities which suddenly diffused such extraordinary riches through his kingdom. But when, instead of that golden harvest which they had expected to reap without toil or pains, the Spaniards saw that their prospect of wealth was remote as well as uncertain, and that it could not be attained but by the slow and persevering efforts of industry, the disappointment of those chimerical hopes occasioned such dejection of mind as bordered on despair, and led to general discontent. In vain did Columbus endeavour to revive their spirits by pointing out the fertility of the soil,

[*r*] Life of Columbus, c. 51. Herrera, dec. 1. lib. ii. c. 10.

[*s*] P. Martyr, dec. p. 39.

and exhibiting the specimens of gold daily brought in from different parts of the island. They had not patience to wait for the gradual returns which the former might yield, and the latter they despised as scanty and inconsiderable. The spirit of disaffection spread, and a conspiracy was formed, which might have been fatal to Columbus and the colony. Happily he discovered it, and seizing the ringleaders, punished some of them, sent others prisoners into Spain, whither he dispatched twelve of the ships which had served as transports, with an earnest request for a reinforcement of men and a large supply of provisions [1].

1494]. Meanwhile, in order to banish that idleness, which, by allowing his people leisure to brood over their disappointment, nourished the spirit of discontent, Columbus planned several expeditions into the interior part of the country. He sent a detachment, under the command of Alonso de Ojeda, a vigilant and enterprising officer, to visit the district of Cibao, which was said to yield the greatest quantity of gold, and followed him in person with the main body of his troops (March 12). In this expedition he displayed all the pomp of military magnificence that he could exhibit, in order to strike the imagination of the natives. He marched with colours flying, with martial music, and with a small body of cavalry that paraded sometimes in the front and sometimes in the rear. As those were the first horses which appeared in the New World, they were objects of terror no less than of admiration to the Indians, who having no tame animals themselves, were unacquainted with that vast accession of power, which man hath acquired by subjecting them to his dominion. They supposed them to be rational creatures. They imagined that the horse and the rider formed one animal, with whose speed they were astonished, and whose impe-

[1] Herrera, dec. 1. lib. ii. c. 10, 11.

tuosity and strength they considered as irresistible. But while Columbus endeavoured to inspire the natives with a dread of his power, he did not neglect the arts of gaining their love and confidence. He adhered scrupulously to the principles of integrity and justice in all his transactions with them, and treated them on every occasion, not only with humanity, but with indulgence. The district of Cibao answered the description given of it by the natives. It was mountainous and uncultivated, but in every river and brook gold was gathered either in dust or in grains, some of which were of considerable size. The Indians had never opened any mines in search of gold. To penetrate into the bowels of the earth, and to refine the rude ore, were operations too complicated and laborious for their talents and industry, and they had no such high value for gold as to put their ingenuity and invention upon the stretch in order to obtain it [u]. The small quantity of that precious metal which they possessed, was either picked up in the beds of the rivers, or washed from the mountains by the heavy rains that fall within the tropics. But, from those indications, the Spaniards could no longer doubt that the country contained rich treasures in its bowels, of which they hoped soon to be masters [w]. In order to secure the command of this valuable province, Columbus erected a small fort, to which he gave the name of St. Thomas, by way of ridicule upon some of his incredulous followers, who would not believe that the country produced gold, until they saw it with their own eyes, and touched it with their hands [x].

The account of those promising appearances of wealth in the country of Cibao came very seasonably to comfort the desponding colony, which was affected with distresses of various kinds. The stock

[u] Oviedo, lib. ii. p. 90. A. [w] P. Martyr, dec. p. 32.

[x] Herrera, dec. i. lib. ii. c. 12. Life of Columbus, c. 52.



of provisions which had been brought from Europe was mostly consumed ; what remained was so much corrupted by the heat and moisture of the climate, as to be almost unfit for use ; the natives cultivated so small a portion of ground, and with so little skill, that it hardly yielded what was sufficient for their own subsistence ; the Spaniards at Isabella had hitherto neither time nor leisure to clear the soil, so as to reap any considerable fruits of their own industry. On all these accounts, they became afraid of perishing with hunger, and were reduced already to a scanty allowance. At the same time, the diseases predominant in the torrid zone, and which rage chiefly in those uncultivated countries, where the hand of industry has not opened the woods, drained the marshes, and confined the rivers within a certain channel, began to spread among them. Alarmed at the violence and unusual symptoms of those maladies, they exclaimed against Columbus and his companions in the former voyage, who, by their splendid but deceitful descriptions of Hispaniola, had allured them to quit Spain for a barbarous uncultivated land, where they must either be cut off by famine, or die of unknown distempers. Several of the officers and persons of note, instead of checking, joined in those seditious complaints. Father Boyle, the apostolical vicar, was one of the most turbulent and outrageous. It required all the authority and address of Columbus to re-establish subordination and tranquillity in the colony. Threats and promises were alternately employed for this purpose ; but nothing contributed more to sooth the malcontents, than the prospect of finding, in the mines of Cibao, such a rich store of treasure as would be a recompence for all their sufferings, and efface the memory of former disappointments.

When, by his unwearied endeavours, concord and order were so far restored, that he could venture to



leave the island, Columbus resolved to pursue his discoveries, that he might be able to ascertain whether those new countries with which he had opened a communication were connected with any region of the earth already known, or whether they were to be considered as a separate portion of the globe hitherto unvisited. He appointed his brother Don Diego, with the assistance of a council of officers, to govern the island in his absence ; and gave the command of a body of soldiers to Don Pedro Margarita, with which he was to visit the different parts of the island, and endeavour to establish the authority of the Spaniards among the inhabitants. Having left them very particular instructions with respect to their conduct, he weighed anchor on the twenty-fourth of April, with one ship and two small barks under his command. During a tedious voyage of full five months, he had a trial of almost all the numerous hardships to which persons of his profession are exposed, without making any discovery of importance, except the island of Jamaica. As he ranged along the southern coast of Cuba [*y*], he was entangled in a labyrinth formed by an incredible number of small islands, to which he gave the name of the Queen's Garden. In this unknown course, among rocks and shelves, he was retarded by contrary winds, assaulted with furious storms, and alarmed with the terrible thunder and lightning which is often almost incessant between the tropics. At length his provisions fell short ; his crew, exhausted with fatigue as well as hunger, murmured and threatened, and were ready to proceed to the most desperate extremities against him. Beset with danger in such various forms, he was obliged to keep continual watch, to observe every occurrence with his own eyes, to issue every order, and to superintend the execution of it. On no occasion, was the extent of his skill and experience

[*y*] See NOTE XIX.

as a navigator so much tried. To these the squadron owed its safety. But this unremitted fatigue of body, and intense application of mind, overpowering his constitution, though naturally vigorous and robust, brought on a feverish disorder, which terminated in a lethargy, that deprived him of sense and memory, and had almost proved fatal to his life [z].

But, on his return to Hispaniola (Sept. 27), the sudden emotion of joy which he felt upon meeting with his brother Bartholomew at Isabella, occasioned such a flow of spirits as contributed greatly to his recovery. It was now thirteen years since the two brothers, whom similarity of talents united in close friendship, had separated from each other, and during that long period there had been no intercourse between them. Bartholomew, after finishing his negotiation in the court of England, had set out for Spain by the way of France. At Paris he received an account of the extraordinary discoveries which his brother had made in his first voyage, and that he was then preparing to embark on a second expedition. Though this naturally induced him to pursue his journey with the utmost dispatch, the admiral had sailed for Hispaniola before he reached Spain. Ferdinand and Isabella received him with the respect due to the nearest kinsman of a person whose merit and services rendered him so conspicuous; and as they knew what consolation his presence would afford to his brother, they persuaded him to take the command of three ships, which they had appointed to carry provisions to the colony at Isabella [z].

He could not have arrived at any juncture when Columbus stood more in need of a friend capable of assisting him with his counsels, or of dividing with

[z] Life of Columbus, c. 54, &c. Herrera, dec. 1. lib. ii. c. 13, 14. P. Martyr, dec. p. 34, &c.

[z] Herrera, dec. 1. lib. ii. c. 15.

him the cares and burden of government. For although the provisions now brought from Europe afforded a temporary relief to the Spaniards from the calamities of famine, the supply was not in such quantity as to support them long, and the island did not hitherto yield what was sufficient for their sustenance. They were threatened with another danger, still more formidable than the return of scarcity, and which demanded more immediate attention. No sooner did Columbus leave the island on his voyage of discovery, than the soldiers under Margarita, as if they had been set free from discipline and subordination, scorned all restraint. Instead of conforming to the prudent instructions of Columbus, they dispersed in straggling parties over the island, lived at discretion upon the natives, wasted their provisions, seized their women, and treated that inoffensive race with all the insolence of military oppression [a].

As long as the Indians had any prospect that their sufferings might come to a period by the voluntary departure of the invaders, they submitted in silence, and dissembled their sorrow ; but they now perceived that the yoke would be as permanent as it was intolerable. The Spaniards had built a town, and surrounded it with ramparts. They had erected forts in different places. They had inclosed and sown several fields. It was apparent that they came not to visit the country, but to settle in it. Though the number of those strangers was inconsiderable, the state of cultivation among this rude people was so imperfect, and in such exact proportion to their own consumption, that it was with difficulty they could afford subsistence to their new guests. Their own mode of life was so indolent and inactive, the warmth of the climate so enervating, the constitution of their bodies naturally so feeble, and so unaccustomed to the laborious exertions of industry, that they were

[a] P. Martyr, dec. p. 47.

satisfied with a proportion of food amazingly small. A handful of maize, or a little of the insipid bread made of the cassada-root, was sufficient to support men, whose strength and spirits were not exhausted by any vigorous efforts either of body or mind. The Spaniards, though the most abstemious of all the European nations, appeared to them excessively voracious. One Spaniard consumed as much as several Indians. This keenness of appetite surprised them so much, and seemed to be so insatiable, that they supposed the Spaniards had left their own country, because it did not produce as much as was requisite to gratify their immoderate desire of food, and had come among them in quest of nourishment [6]. Self-preservation prompted them to wish for the departure of guests who wasted so fast their slender stock of provisions. The injuries which they suffered, added to their impatience for this event. They had long expected that the Spaniards would retire of their own accord. They now perceived that in order to avert the destruction with which they were threatened, either by the slow consumption of famine, or by the violence of their oppressors, it was necessary to assume courage, to attack those formidable invaders with united force, and drive them from the settlements of which they had violently taken possession.

Such were the sentiments which universally prevailed among the Indians, when Columbus returned to Isabella. Inflamed by the unprovoked outrages of the Spaniards, with a degree of rage of which their gentle natures, formed to suffer and submit, seemed hardly susceptible, they waited only for a signal from their leaders to fall upon the colony. Some of the caziques had already surprised and cut off several stragglers. The dread of this impending danger united the Spaniards, and re-established the authority of Co-

[6] Herrera, dec. 1. lib. ii. c. 17.

lumbus, as they saw no prospect of safety but in committing themselves to his prudent guidance. It was now necessary to have recourse to arms, the employing of which against the Indians, Columbus had hitherto avoided with the greatest solicitude. Unequal as the conflict may seem, between the naked inhabitants of the New World, armed with clubs, sticks hardened in the fire, wooden swords, and arrows pointed with bones or flints ; and troops accustomed to the discipline, and provided with the instruments of destruction known in the European art of war, the situation of the Spaniards was far from being exempt from danger. The vast superiority of the natives in number, compensated many defects. An handful of men was about to encounter a whole nation. One adverse event, or even any unforeseen delay in determining the fate of the war, might prove fatal to the Spaniards. Conscious that success depended on the vigour and rapidity of his operations, Columbus instantly assembled his forces. They were reduced to a very small number. Diseases, engendered by the warmth and humidity of the country, or occasioned by their own licentiousness, had raged among them with much violence ; experience had not yet taught them the art either of curing these, or the precautions requisite for guarding against them ; two-thirds of the original adventurers were dead, and many of those who survived were incapable of service [c]. The body which took the field (March 24, 1495) consisted only of two hundred foot, twenty horse, and twenty large dogs ; and how strange soever it may seem, to mention the last as composing part of a military force, they were not perhaps the least formidable and destructive of the whole, when employed against naked and timid Indians. All the caziques of the island, Guacanahari excepted, who retained an inviolable attachment to the Spaniards,

[c] Life of Columbus, c. 61.

were in arms to oppose Columbus, with forces amounting, if we may believe the Spanish historians, to a hundred thousand men. Instead of attempting to draw the Spaniards into the fastnesses of the woods and mountains, they were so imprudent as to take their station in the Vega Real, the most open plain in the country. Columbus did not allow them time to perceive their error, or to alter their position. He attacked them during the night, when undisciplined troops are least capable of acting with union and concert, and obtained an easy and bloodless victory. The consternation with which the Indians were filled by the noise and havoc made by the fire-arms, by the impetuous force of the cavalry, and the fierce onset of the dogs, was so great, that they threw down their weapons, and fled without attempting resistance. Many were slain; more were taken prisoners, and reduced to servitude [d]; and so thoroughly were the rest intimidated, that from that moment they abandoned themselves to despair, relinquishing all thoughts of contending with aggressors whom they deemed invincible.

Columbus employed several months in marching through the island, and in subjecting it to the Spanish government, without meeting with any opposition. He imposed a tribute upon all the inhabitants above the age of fourteen. Each person who lived in those districts, where gold was found, was obliged to pay quarterly as much gold dust as filled a hawk's bell; from those in other parts of the country, twenty-five pounds of cotton were demanded. This was the first regular taxation of the Indians, and served as a precedent for exactions still more intolerable. Such an imposition was extremely contrary to those maxims which Columbus had hitherto inculcated, with respect to the mode of treating them. But intrigues were carrying on in the court of Spain at this juncture, in

[d] See NOTE XX.

order to undermine his power, and discredit his operations, which constrained him to depart from his own system of administration. Several unfavourable accounts of his conduct, as well as of the countries discovered by him, had been transmitted to Spain. Margarita and father Boyl were now at court; and in order to justify their own conduct, or gratify their resentment, watched with malevolent attention for every opportunity of spreading insinuations to his detriment. Many of the courtiers viewed his growing reputation and power with envious eyes. Fonseca, archdeacon of Seville, who was entrusted with the chief direction of Indian affairs, had conceived such an unfavourable opinion of Columbus, for some reason which the contemporary writers have not mentioned, that he listened with partiality to every invective against him. It was not easy for an unfriended stranger, unpractised in courtly arts, to counteract the machinations of so many enemies. Columbus saw that there was but one method of supporting his own credit, and of silencing all his adversaries. He must produce such a quantity of gold as would not only justify what he had reported with respect to the richness of the country, but encourage Ferdinand and Isabella to persevere in prosecuting his plans. The necessity of obtaining it, forced him not only to impose this heavy tax upon the Indians, but to exact payment of it with extreme rigour; and may be pleaded in excuse for his deviating on this occasion from the mildness and humanity with which he uniformly treated that unhappy people [e].

The labour, attention, and foresight, which the Indians were obliged to employ in procuring the tribute demanded of them, appeared the most intolerable of all evils, to men accustomed to pass their days in a careless, improvident indolence. They were incapable of such a regular and persevering exertion

[e] Herrera, dec. 1. lib. ii. c. 17.

of industry, and felt it such a grievous restraint upon their liberty, that they had recourse to an expedient for obtaining deliverance from this yoke, which demonstrates the excess of their impatience and despair. They formed a scheme of starving those oppressors whom they durst not attempt to expel; and from the opinion which they entertained with respect to the voracious appetite of the Spaniards they concluded the execution of it to be very practicable. With this view they suspended all the operations of agriculture; they sowed no maize, they pulled up the roots of the manioc or cassada which were planted, and retiring to the most inaccessible parts of the mountains, left the uncultivated plains to their enemies. This desperate resolution produced in some degree the effects which they expected. The Spaniards were reduced to extreme want; but they received such seasonable supplies of provisions from Europe, and found so many resources in their own ingenuity and industry, that they suffered no great loss of men. The wretched Indians were the victims of their own ill-concerted policy. A great multitude of people, shut up in the mountainous or wooded part of the country, without any food but the spontaneous productions of the earth, soon felt the utmost distresses of famine. This brought on contagious diseases; and, in the course of a few months, more than a third part of the inhabitants of the island perished, after experiencing misery in all its various forms [f].

But while Columbus was establishing the foundations of the Spanish grandeur in the New World, his enemies laboured with unwearied assiduity to deprive him of the glory and rewards, which by his services and sufferings he was entitled to enjoy. The hard-

[f] Herrera, dec. 1. lib. xi. c. 18. Life of Columbus, c. 61. Oviedo, lib. iii. p. 93. D. Benzon Hist. Novi Orbis, lib. i. c. 9. P. Martyr, dec. p. 48.



ships unavoidable in a new settlement, the calamities occasioned by an unhealthy climate, the disasters attending a voyage in unknown seas, were all represented as the effects of his restless and inconsiderate ambition. His prudent attention to preserve discipline and subordination was denominated excess of rigour ; the punishments which he inflicted upon the mutinous and disorderly were imputed to cruelty. These accusations gained such credit in a jealous court, that a commissioner was appointed to repair to Hispaniola, and to inspect into the conduct of Columbus. By the recommendation of his enemies, Aguado, a groom of the bed-chamber, was the person to whom this important trust was committed. But in this choice they seem to have been more influenced by the obsequious attachment of the man to their interest, than by his capacity for the station. Puffed up with such sudden elevation, Aguado displayed, in the exercise of this office, all the frivolous self-importance, and acted with all the disgusting insolence, which are natural to little minds, when raised to unexpected dignity, or employed in functions to which they are not equal. By listening with eagerness to every accusation against Columbus, and encouraging not only the malcontent Spaniards, but even the Indians, to produce their grievances, real or imaginary, he fomented the spirit of dissension in the island, without establishing any regulation of public utility, or that tended to redress the many wrongs, with the odium of which he wished to load the admiral's administration. As Columbus felt sensibly how humiliating his situation must be, if he should remain in the country while such a partial inspector observed his motions, and controlled his jurisdiction, he took the resolution of returning to Spain, in order to lay a full account of all his transactions, particularly with respect to the points in dispute between him and his adversaries, before Ferdinand and Isabella, from

whose justice and discernment he expected an equal and a favourable decision.

1496.] He committed the administration of affairs, during his absence, to Don Bartholomew his brother, with the title of Adelantado, or lieutenant governor. By a choice less fortunate, and which proved the source of many calamities to the colony, he appointed Francis Roldan chief justice, with very extensive powers [g].

In returning to Europe, Columbus held a course different from that which he had taken in his former voyage. He steered almost due east from Hispaniola, in the parallel of twenty-two degrees of latitude ; as experience had not yet discovered the more certain and expeditious method of stretching to the north, in order to fall in with the south-west winds. By this ill-advised choice, which, in the infancy of navigation between the new and old worlds, can hardly be imputed to the admiral as a defect in naval skill, he was exposed to infinite fatigue and danger, in a perpetual struggle with the trade winds, which blow without variation from the east between the tropics. Notwithstanding the almost insuperable difficulties of such a navigation, he persisted in his course with his usual patience and firmness, but made so little way, that he was three months without seeing land. At length his provisions began to fail, the crew was reduced to the scanty allowance of six ounces of bread a-day for each person. The admiral fared no better than the meanest sailor. But, even in this extreme distress, he retained the humanity which distinguishes his character, and refused to comply with the earnest solicitations of his crew, some of whom proposed to feed upon the Indian prisoners whom they were carrying over, and others insisted to throw them over-board, in order to lessen the consumption of their small stock. He represented that

[g] Herrera, dec. 1. lib. ii. c. 18. lib. iii. c. 1.

they were human beings, reduced by a common calamity to the same condition with themselves, and entitled to share an equal fate. His authority and remonstrances dissipated those wild ideas suggested by despair. Nor had they time to recur, as he came soon within sight of the coast of Spain, when all their fears and sufferings ended [*h*].

Columbus appeared at court with the modest but determined confidence of a man conscious not only of integrity, but of having performed great services. Ferdinand and Isabella, ashamed of their own facility in lending too favourable an ear to frivolous or ill-founded accusations, received him with such distinguished marks of respect as covered his enemies with shame. Their censures and calumnies were no more heard of at that juncture. The gold, the pearls, the cotton, and other commodities of value which Columbus produced, seemed fully to refute what the malcontents had propagated with respect to the poverty of the country. By reducing the Indians to obedience, and imposing a regular tax upon them, he had secured to Spain a large accession of new subjects, and the establishment of a revenue that promised to be considerable. By the mines which he had found out and examined, a source of wealth still more copious was opened. Great and unexpected as those advantages were, Columbus represented them only as preludes to future acquisitions, and as the earnest of more important discoveries, which he still meditated, and to which those he had already made would conduct him with ease and certainty [*i*].

The attentive consideration of all these circumstances made such impression, not only upon Isabella, who was flattered with the idea of being the patroness of all Columbus' enterprises, but even upon Ferdinand, who, having originally expressed his diapproba-

[*h*] Herrera, dec. 1. lib. iii. c. 1. Life of Columbus, c. 64.

[*i*] Life of Columbus, c. 65. Herrera, dec. 1. lib. iii. c. 1.

of his schemes, was still apt to doubt of their success, that they resolved to supply the colony in Spaniola with every thing which could render it a permanent establishment, and to furnish Columbus with such a fleet, that he might proceed to search for these new countries, of whose existence he seemed to be confident. The measures most proper for accomplishing both these designs were concerted with Columbus. Discovery had been the sole object of his first voyage to the New World; and though, in his second, settlement had been proposed, the preparations taken for that purpose had either been insufficient, or were rendered ineffectual by the mutinous spirit of the Spaniards, and the unforeseen calamities arising from various causes. Now a plan was to be formed of a regular colony, that might serve as a model in all future establishments. Every particular was considered with attention, and the whole arranged with scrupulous accuracy. The precise number of adventurers who should be permitted to embark was fixed. They were to be of different ranks and proportions; and the proportion of each was established, according to their usefulness and the wants of the colony. A suitable number of women was to be sent to accompany these new settlers. As it was the first object to raise provisions in a country where scarcity of food had been the occasion of so much distress, a considerable body of husbandmen was to be carried over. As the Spaniards had then no conception of deriving any benefit from those productions of the New World which have since yielded so large returns of wealth to Europe, but had formed magnificent ideas, and entertained sanguine expectations with respect to the riches contained in the mines which had been discovered, a band of workmen, skilled in the various arts employed in digging and refining the precious metals, was provided. All

these emigrants were to receive pay and subsistence for some years, at the public expence [*k*].

Thus far the regulations were prudent, and well adapted to the end in view. But as it was foreseen that few would engage voluntarily to settle in a country, whose noxious climate had been fatal to so many of their countrymen, Columbus proposed to transport to Hispaniola such malefactors as had been convicted of crimes, which, though capital, were of a less atrocious nature; and that for the future a certain proportion of the offenders usually sent to the galleys, should be condemned to labour in the mines which were to be opened. This advice, given without due reflection, was as inconsiderately adopted. The prisons of Spain were drained, in order to collect members for the intended colony; and the judges empowered to try criminals, were instructed to recruit it by their future sentences. It is not, however, with such materials that the foundations of a society, destined to be permanent, should be laid. Industry, sobriety, patience, and mutual confidence are indispensably requisite in an infant settlement, where purity of morals must contribute more towards establishing order, than the operation or authority of laws. But when such a mixture of what is corrupt is admitted into the original constitution of the political body, the vices of those unsound and incurable members will probably infect the whole, and must certainly be productive of violent and unhappy effects. This the Spaniards fatally experienced; and the other European nations having successively imitated the practice of Spain in this particular, pernicious consequences have followed in their settlements, which can be imputed to no other cause [*l*].

Though Columbus obtained, with great facility and

[*k*] Herrera, dec. 1. lib. iii. c. 2.

[*l*] Herrera, dec. 1. lib. iii. 3. c. 2. Tournon Hist. Gener. de l'Amerique, i. p. 51.

dispatch, the royal approbation of every measure and regulation that he proposed, his endeavours to carry them into execution were so long retarded, as must have tired out the patience of any man, less accustomed to encounter and to surmount difficulties. Those delays were occasioned partly by that tedious formality and spirit of procrastination, with which the Spaniards conduct business; and partly by the exhausted state of the treasury, which was drained by the expence of celebrating the marriage of Ferdinand and Isabella's only son with Margaret of Austria, and that of Joanna, their second daughter, with Philip archduke of Austria [m]; but must be chiefly imputed to the malicious arts of Columbus' enemies. Astonished at the reception which he met with upon his return, and overawed by his presence, they gave way, for some time, to a tide of favour too strong for them to oppose. Their enmity, however, was too inveterate to remain long inactive. They resumed their operations, and by the assistance of Fonseca, the minister for Indian affairs, who was now promoted to the bishopric of Bajados, they threw in so many obstacles to protract the preparations for Columbus' expedition, that a year elapsed before he [n] could procure two ships to carry over a part of the supplies destined for the colony, and almost two years were spent before the small squadron was equipped, of which he himself was to take the command [o].

1498.] This squadron consisted of six ships only, of no great burden, and but indifferently provided for a long or dangerous navigation. The voyage which he now meditated was in a course different from any he had undertaken. As he was fully persuaded, that the fertile regions of India lay to the south-west of those countries which he had discovered,

[m] P. Martyr, epist. 168. [o] Herrera, dec. 1. lib. iii. c. 9.

[n] Life of Columbus, c. 65.

he proposed as the most certain method of finding out these, to stand directly south from the Canary or Cape de Verd islands, until he came under the equinoctial line, and then to stretch to the west before the favourable wind for such a course, which blows invariably between the tropics. With this idea he set sail [May 30,] and touched first at the Canary, and then at the Cape de Verd islands [July 4]. From the former he dispatched three of his ships, with a supply of provisions, for the colony in Hispaniola: with the other three, he continued his voyage towards the south. No remarkable occurrence happened until they arrived within five degrees of the line [July 19]. There they were becalmed, and at the same time the heat became so excessive, that many of their wine casks burst, the liquor in others soured, and their provisions corrupted [*p*]. The Spaniards, who had never ventured so far to the south, were afraid that the ships would take fire, and began to apprehend the reality of what the ancients had taught concerning the destructive qualities of that torrid region of the globe. They were relieved, in some measure, from their fears by a seasonable fall of rain. This, however, though so heavy and unintermitting that the men could hardly keep the deck, did not greatly mitigate the intenseness of the heat. The admiral, who with his usual vigilance had in person directed every operation from the beginning of the voyage, was so much exhausted by fatigue and want of sleep, that it brought on a violent fit of the gout, accompanied with a fever. All these circumstances constrained him to yield to the importunities of his crew, and to alter his course to the north-west, in order to reach some of the Caribbee islands, where he might refit, and be supplied with provisions.

On the first of August, the man stationed in the round top surprised them with the joyful cry of *land*.

[*p*] P. Martyr, dec. p. 70,

They stood towards it, and discovered a considerable island, which the admiral called Trinidad, a name it still retains. It lies on the coast of Guiana, near the mouth of the Orinoco. This, though a river only of the third or fourth magnitude in the New World, far surpasses any of the streams of our hemisphere. It rolls towards the ocean such a vast body of water, and rushes into it with such impetuous force, that when it meets the tide, which on that coast rises to an uncommon height, their collision occasions a swell and agitation of the waves no less surprising than formidable. In this conflict, the irresistible torrent of the river so far prevails, that it freshens the ocean many leagues with its flood [9]. Columbus, before he could perceive the danger, was entangled among those adverse currents and tempestuous waves, and it was with the utmost difficulty that he escaped through a narrow strait, which appeared so tremendous, that he called it La Boca del Drago. As soon as the consternation which this occasioned, permitted him to reflect upon the nature of an appearance so extraordinary, he discerned in it a source of comfort and hope. He justly concluded, that such a vast body of water as this river contained, could not be supplied by any island, but must flow through a country of immense extent, and of consequence, that he was now arrived at that continent which it had long been the object of his wishes to discover. Full of this idea, he stood to the west along the coast of those provinces which are now known by the names of Paria and Cumana. He landed in several places, and had some intercourse with the people, who resembled those of Hispaniola in their appearance and manner of life. They wore, as ornaments, small plates of gold, and pearls of considerable value, which they willingly exchanged for European toys. They seemed to possess a better understanding, and

[9] Gumilla Hist. de l'Orenoque, tom. i. p. 14.



greater courage, than the inhabitants of the islands. The country produced four-footed animals of several kinds, as well as a great variety of fowls and fruits [r]. The admiral was so much delighted with its beauty and fertility, that, with the warm enthusiasm of a discoverer, he imagined it to be the paradise described in scripture, which the Almighty chose for the residence of man, while he retained innocence that rendered him worthy of such an habitation [s]. Thus Columbus had the glory not only of discovering to mankind the existence of a New World, but made considerable progress towards a perfect knowledge of it; and was the first man who conducted the Spaniards to that vast continent which has been the chief seat of their empire, and the source of their treasures in this quarter of the globe. The shattered condition of his ships, scarcity of provisions, his own infirmities, together with the impatience of his crew, prevented him from pursuing his discoveries any farther, and made it necessary to bear away for Hispaniola. In his way thither, he discovered the islands of Cubagua and Margarita, which afterwards became remarkable for their pearl-fishery. When he arrived at Hispaniola [Aug. 30], he was wasted to an extreme degree with fatigue and sickness; but found the affairs of the colony in such a situation, as afforded him no prospect of enjoying that repose of which he stood so much in need.

Many revolutions had happened in that country during his absence. His brother, the adelantado, in consequence of an advice which the admiral gave before his departure, had removed the colony from Isabella to a more commodious station, on the opposite side of the island, and laid the foundation

[r] Herrera, dec. 1. lib. iii. c. 9, 10, 11. Life of Columbus, c. 66—73.

[s] Herrera, dec. 1. lib. iii. c. 12. Gomara, c. 84. See NOTE XXI.

of St. Domingo, [u], which was long the most considerable European town in the New World, and the seat of the supreme courts in the Spanish dominions there. As soon as the Spaniards were established in this new settlement, the adelantado, that they might neither languish in an activity, nor have leisure to form new cabals, marched into those parts of the island which his brother had not yet visited or reduced to obedience. As the people were unable to resist, they submitted everywhere to the tribute which he imposed. But they soon found the burden to be so intolerable, that, overawed as they were by the superior power of their oppressors, they took arms against them. Those insurrections, however, were not formidable. A conflict with timid and naked Indians was neither dangerous nor of doubtful issue.

But while the adelantado was employed against them in the field, a mutiny, of an aspect far more alarming, broke out among the Spaniards. The ringleader of it was Francis Roldan, whom Columbus had placed in a station which required him to be the guardian of order and tranquillity in the colony. A turbulent and inconsiderate ambition precipitated him into this desperate measure, so unbecoming his rank. The arguments which he employed to seduce his countrymen were frivolous and ill-founded. He accused Columbus and his two brothers of arrogance and severity; he pretended that they aimed at establishing an independent dominion in the country; he taxed them with an intention of cutting off part of the Spaniards by hunger and fatigue, that they might more easily reduce the remainder to subjection; he represented it as unworthy of Castilians, to remain the tame and passive slaves of three Genoese adventurers. As men have always a propensity to impute the hardships of which they feel the pressure, to the misconduct of their rulers; as every nation

[u] P. Martyr, dec. p. 56.

views with a jealous eye the power and exaltation of foreigners, Roldan's insinuations made a deep impression on his countrymen. His character and rank added weight to them. A considerable number of the Spaniards made choice of him as their leader, and taking arms against the adelantado and his brother, seized the king's magazine of provisions, and endeavoured to surprise the fort at St. Domingo. This was preserved by the vigilance and courage of Don Diego Columbus. The mutineers were obliged to retire to the province of Xaragua, where they continued not only to disclaim the adelantado's authority themselves, but excited the Indians to throw off the yoke [w].

Such was the distracted state of the colony when Columbus landed at St. Domingo. He was astonished to find that the three ships which he had dispatched from the Canaries were not yet arrived. By the unskilfulness of the pilots, and the violence of currents, they had been carried a hundred and sixty miles to the west of St. Domingo, and forced to take shelter in a harbour of the province of Xaragua, where Roldan and his seditious followers were cantoned. Roldan carefully concealed from the commanders of the ships his insurrection against the adelantado, and employing his utmost address to gain their confidence, persuaded them to set on shore a considerable part of the new settlers whom they brought over, that they might proceed by land to St. Domingo. It required but few arguments to prevail with those men to espouse his cause. They were the refuse of the jails of Spain, to whom idleness, licentiousness, and deeds of violence were familiar; and they returned eagerly to a course of life nearly resembling that to which they had been accustomed. The commanders of the ships perceiving,

[w] Herrera, dec. 1. lib. iii. c. 5—8. Life of Columbus, c. 74—77. Gomara, c. 23. P. Martyr, p. 78.

when it was too late, their imprudence in disembarking so many of their men, stood away for St. Domingo, and got safe into the port a few days after the admiral; but their stock of provisions was so wasted during a voyage of such long continuance, that they brought little relief to the colony [x].

By this junction with a band of such bold and desperate associates, Roldan became extremely formidable, and no less extravagant in his demands. Columbus, though filled with resentment at his ingratitude, and highly exasperated by the insolence of his followers, made no haste to take the field. He trembled at the thoughts of kindling the flames of a civil war, in which, whatever party prevailed, the power and strength of both must be so much wasted, as might encourage the common enemy to unite and complete their destruction. At the same time, he observed, that the prejudices and passions which incited the rebels to take arms, had so far infected those who still adhered to him, that many of them were adverse, and all cold to the service. From such sentiments, with respect to the public interest, as well as from this view of his own situation, he chose to negotiate rather than to fight. By a seasonable proclamation, offering free pardon to such as should merit it by returning to their duty, he made impression upon some of the malcontents. By engaging to grant such as should desire it the liberty of returning to Spain, he allured all those unfortunate adventurers, who, from sickness and disappointment, were disgusted with the country. By promising to re-establish Roldan in his former office, he soothed his pride; and, by complying with most of his demands in behalf of his followers, he satisfied their avarice. Thus, gradually and without bloodshed, but after many tedious negotiations, he dissolved this danger-

[x] Herrera, dec. 1. lib. iii. c. 12. Life of Columbus, c. 78, 79.

ous combination which threatened the colony with ruin ; and restored the appearance of order, regular government, and tranquillity [*y*].

In consequence of this agreement with the mutineers, lands were allotted them in different parts of the island, and the Indians settled in each district were appointed to cultivate a certain portion of ground for the use of those new masters. [1499] The performance of this work was substituted in place of the tribute formerly imposed ; and how necessary soever such a regulation might be in a sickly and feeble colony, it introduced among the Spaniards, the *Repartimientos*, or distributions of Indians established by them in all their settlements, which brought numberless calamities upon that unhappy people, and subjected them to the most grievous oppression [*z*]. This was not the only bad effect of the insurrection in Hispaniola ; it prevented Columbus from prosecuting his discoveries on the continent, as self-preservation obliged him to keep near his person his brother the adelantado, and the sailors whom he intended to have employed in that service. As soon as his affairs would permit, he sent some of his ships to Spain with a journal of the voyage which he had made, a description of the new countries which he had discovered, a chart of the coast along which he had sailed, and specimens of the gold, the pearls, and other curious or valuable productions which he had acquired by trafficking with the natives. At the same time he transmitted an account of the insurrection in Hispaniola ; he accused the mutineers not only of having thrown the colony into such violent convulsions, as threatened its dissolution, but of having obstructed every attempt towards discovery and improvement, by their unprovoked rebellion against

[*y*] Herrera, dec. 1. lib. iii. c. 13, 14. Life of Columbus, p. 80, &c.

[*z*] Herrera, dec. 1. lib. iii. c. 14, &c.

their superiors, and proposed several regulations for the better government of the island, as well as the extinction of that mutinous spirit, which, though suppressed at present, might soon burst out with additional rage. Roldan and his associates did not neglect to convey to Spain, by the same ships, an apology for their own conduct, together with their recriminations upon the admiral and his brothers. Unfortunately for the honour of Spain, and the happiness of Columbus, the latter gained most credit in the court of Ferdinand and Isabella, and produced unexpected effects [a].

But, previous to the relating of these, it is proper to take a view of some events, which merit attention, both on account of their own importance, and their connection with the history of the New World. While Columbus was engaged in his successive voyages to the west, the spirit of discovery did not languish in Portugal, the kingdom where it first acquired vigour, and became enterprising. Self-condemnation and regret were not the only sentiments to which the success of Columbus, and reflection upon their own imprudence in rejecting his proposals, gave rise among the Portuguese. They excited a general emulation to surpass his performances, and an ardent desire to make some reparation to their country for their own error. With this view, Emanuel, who inherited the enterprising genius of his predecessors, persisted in their grand scheme of opening a passage to the East Indies by the Cape of Good Hope, and soon after his accession to the throne, equipped a squadron for that important voyage. He gave the command of it to Vasco de Gama, a man of noble birth, possessed of virtue, prudence, and courage, equal to the station. The squadron, like all those fitted out for discovery in the infancy of navigation,

[a] Herrera, dec. 1. lib. iii. c. 14. Benzon, Hist. Orb. lib. i, c. 2.

was extremely feeble, consisting only of three vessels, of neither burden nor force adequate to the service. As the Europeans were at that time little acquainted with the course of the trade-winds and periodical monsoons, which render navigation in the Atlantic ocean, as well as in the sea that separates Africa from India, at some seasons easy, and at others not only dangerous, but almost impracticable, the time chosen for Gama's departure was the most improper during the whole year. He set sail from Lisbon on the ninth of July [1497], and standing towards the south, had to struggle for four months with contrary winds, before he could reach the Cape of Good Hope. Here their violence began to abate [Nov. 20]; and during an interval of calm weather, Gama doubled that formidable promontory, which had so long been the boundary of navigation, and directed his course towards the north-east, along the African coast. He touched at several ports; and after various adventures, which the Portuguese historians relate with high but just encomiums upon his conduct and intrepidity, he came to anchor before the city of Melinda. Throughout all the vast countries which extend along the coast of Africa, from the river Senegal to the confines of Zanguebar, the Portuguese had found a race of men rude and uncultivated, strangers to letters, to arts, and commerce, and differing from the inhabitants of Europe, no less in their features and complexion, than in their manners and institutions. As they advanced from this, they observed, to their inexpressible joy, that the human form gradually altered and improved; the Asiatic features began to predominate, marks of civilization appeared, letters were known, the Mahometan religion was established, and a commerce, far from being inconsiderable, was carried on. At that time several vessels from India were in the port of Melinda. Gama now pursued his voyage with almost absolute

certainty of success, and, under the conduct of a Mahometan pilot, arrived at Calecut, upon the coast of Malabar, on the twenty-second of May one thousand four hundred and ninety-eight. What he beheld of the wealth, the populousness, the cultivation, the industry and arts of this highly civilized country, far surpassed any idea that he had formed, from the imperfect accounts which the Europeans had hitherto received of it. But as he possessed neither sufficient force to attempt a settlement, nor proper commodities with which he could carry on commerce of any consequence, he hastened back to Portugal, with an account of his success in performing a voyage, the longest, as well as most difficult, that had ever been made, since the first invention of navigation. He landed at Lisbon on the fourteenth of September one thousand four hundred and ninety-nine, two years two months and five days from the time he left that port [a].

Thus, during the course of the fifteenth century, mankind made greater progress in exploring the state of the habitable globe, than in all the ages which had elapsed previous to that period. The spirit of discovery, feeble at first and cautious, moved within a very narrow sphere, and made its efforts with hesitation and timidity. Encouraged by success, it became adventurous, and boldly extended its operations. In the course of its progression, it continued to acquire vigour, and advanced at length with a rapidity and force which burst through all the limits within which ignorance and fear had hitherto circumscribed the activity of the human race. Almost fifty years were employed by the Portuguese in creeping along the coast of Africa from Cape Non to Cape de Verd, the latter of which lies only twelve degrees to the south of the former. In less than thirty years they ventured beyond the equinoctial line into another

[a] Ramusio, vol. i. 119, D.



hemisphere, and penetrated to the southern extremity of Africa, at the distance of forty-nine degrees from Cape de Verd. During the last seven years of the century, a New World was discovered in the west, not inferior in extent to all the parts of the earth with which mankind were at that time acquainted. In the east, unknown seas and countries were found out, and a communication, long desired, but hitherto concealed, was opened between Europe and the opulent regions of India. In comparison with events so wonderful and unexpected, all that had hitherto been deemed great or splendid, faded away and disappeared. Vast objects now presented themselves. The human mind, roused and interested by the prospect, engaged with ardour in pursuit of them, and exerted its active powers in a new direction.

This spirit of enterprize, though but newly awakened in Spain, began soon to operate extensively. All the attempts towards discovery made in that kingdom, had hitherto been carried on by Columbus alone, and at the expence of the sovereign. But now private adventurers, allured by the magnificent descriptions he gave of the regions which he had visited, as well as by the specimens of their wealth which he produced, offered to fit out squadrons at their own risk, and to go in quest of new countries. The Spanish court, whose scanty revenues were exhausted by the charge of its expeditions to the New World, which, though they opened alluring prospects of future benefit, yielded a very sparing return of present profit, was extremely willing to devolve the burden of discovery upon its subjects. It seized with joy an opportunity of rendering the avarice, the ingenuity, and efforts of projectors, instrumental in promoting designs of certain advantage to the public, though of doubtful success with respect to themselves. One of the first propositions of this kind was made by Alonso de Ojeda, a gallant and

active officer, who had accompanied Columbus in his second voyage. His rank and character procured him such credit with the merchants of Seville, that they undertook to equip four ships, provided he could obtain the royal license, authorising the voyage. The powerful patronage of the bishop of Badajos easily secured success in a suit so agreeable to the court. Without consulting Columbus, or regarding the rights and jurisdiction which he had acquired by the capitulation in one thousand four hundred and ninety-two, Ojeda was permitted to set out for the New World. In order to direct his course, the bishop communicated to him the admiral's journal of his last voyage, and his charts of the countries which he had discovered. Ojeda struck out into no new path of navigation, but adhering servilely to the route which Columbus had taken, arrived on the coast of Paria [May]. He traded with the natives, and standing to the west, proceeded as far as Cape de Vela, and ranged along a considerable extent of coast beyond that on which Columbus had touched. Having thus ascertained the opinion of Columbus, that this country was a part of the continent, Ojeda returned by way of Hispaniola to Spain [October,] with some reputation as a discoverer, but with little benefit to those who had raised the funds for the expedition [b].

Amerigo Vespucci, a Florentine gentleman, accompanied Ojeda in this voyage. In what station he served, is uncertain; but as he was an experienced sailor, and eminently skilful in all the sciences subservient to navigation, he seems to have acquired such authority among his companions, that they willingly allowed him to have a chief share in directing their operations during the voyage. Soon after his return, he transmitted an account of his adventures and discoveries to one of his countrymen;

[b] Herrera, dec. 1. lib. iv. c. 1, 2, 3.

and labouring with the vanity of a traveller to magnify his own exploits, he had the address and confidence to frame his narrative, so as to make it appear that he had the glory of having first discovered the continent in the New World. Amerigo's account was drawn up not only with art, but with some elegance. It contained an amusing history of his voyage, and judicious observations upon the natural productions, the inhabitants, and the customs of the countries which he had visited. As it was the first description of any part of the New World that was published, a performance so well calculated to gratify the passion of mankind for what is new and marvellous, circulated rapidly, and was read with admiration. The country of which Amerigo was supposed to be the discoverer, came gradually to be called by his name. The caprice of mankind often as unaccountable as unjust, has perpetuated this error. By the universal consent of nations, AMERICA is the name bestowed on this new quarter of the globe. The bold pretensions of a fortunate impostor have robbed the discoverer of the New World of a distinction which belonged to him. The name of Amerigo has supplanted that of Columbus; and mankind may regret an act of injustice, which, having received the sanction of time, it is now too late to redress [c].

During the same year, another voyage of discovery was undertaken. Columbus not only introduced the spirit of naval enterprize into Spain, but all the first adventurers who distinguished themselves in this new career, were formed by his instructions, and acquired in his voyages the skill and information which qualified them to imitate his example. Alonso Nigno, who had served under the admiral in his last expedition, fitted out a single ship, in conjunction with Christopher Guerra, a merchant of Seville, and sailed to the coast of Paria. This voyage

[c] See NOTE XXII.

seems to have been conducted with greater attention to private emolument, than to any general or national object. Nigno and Guerra made no discoveries of any importance; but they brought home such a return of gold and pearls, as inflamed their countrymen with the desire of engaging in similar adventures [d].

Soon after [Jan. 13, 1500], Vincent Yanez Pinzon, one of the admiral's companions in his first voyage, sailed from Palos with four ships. He stood boldly towards the south, and was the first Spaniard who ventured to cross the equinoctial line; but he seems to have landed on no part of the coast beyond the mouth of the Maragnon, or river of the Amazons. All these navigators adopted the erroneous theory of Columbus, and believed that the countries which they had discovered were part of the vast continent of India [e].

During the last year of the fifteenth century, that fertile district of America, on the confines of which Pinzon had stopt short, was more fully discovered. The successful voyage of Gama to the East Indies having encouraged the king of Portugal to fit out a fleet so powerful, as not only to carry on trade, but to attempt conquest, he gave the command of it to Pedro Alvarez Cabral. In order to avoid the coast of Africa, where he was certain of meeting with variable breezes, or frequent calms, which might retard his voyage, Cabral stood out to sea, and kept so far to the west, that, to his surprise, he found himself upon the shore of an unknown country, in the tenth degree beyond the line. He imagined, at first, that it was some island in the Atlantic ocean, hitherto unobserved; but, proceeding along its coast for several days, he was led gradually to believe, that a country so extensive formed a part of some

[d] P. Martyr, dec. p. 87. Herrera, dec. 1. lib. iv. c. 5.

[e] Herrera, dec. 1. lib. iv. c. 6. P. Martyr, dec. p. 95.

great continent. This latter opinion was well founded. The country with which he fell in belongs to that province in south America, now known by the name of Brasil. He landed; and having formed a very high idea of the fertility of the soil, and agreeableness of the climate, he took possession of it for the crown of Portugal, and dispatched a ship to Lisbon with an account of this event, which appeared to be no less important than it was unexpected [*f*]. Columbus' discovery of the New World was the effort of an active genius, enlightened by science, guided by experience, and acting upon a regular plan, executed with no less courage than perseverance. But from this adventure of the Portuguese, it appears that chance might have accomplished that great design which it is now the pride of human reason to have formed and perfected. If the sagacity of Columbus had not conducted mankind to America, Cabral, by a fortunate accident, might have led them, a few years latter, to the knowledge of that extensive continent [*g*].

While the Spaniards and Portuguese, by those successive voyages, were daily acquiring more enlarged ideas of the extent and opulence of that quarter of the globe which Columbus had made known to them, he himself, far from enjoying the tranquillity and honours with which his services should have been recompensed, was struggling with every distress in which the envy and malevolence of the people under his command, or the ingratitude of the court which he served, could involve him. Though the pacification with Roldan broke the union and weakened the force of the mutineers, it did not extirpate the seeds of discord out of the island. Several of the malcontents continued in arms, refusing to submit to the admiral. He and his brothers were obliged to take the field alternately, in order to check their incur-

[*f*] *Herrera*, dec. i. lib. iv. c. 7.[*g*] *Id.* lib. vii. c. 5.

s, or to punish their crimes. The perpetual occasion and disquiet which this created, prevented from giving due attention to the dangerous machinations of his enemies in the court of Spain. A number of such as were most dissatisfied with administration, had embraced the opportunity of returning to Europe with the ships which he dispatched from St. Domingo. The final disappointment of all their hopes inflamed the rage of these unfortunate adventurers against Columbus to the utmost pitch. Their poverty and distress, by exciting compassion, rendered their accusations credible, their complaints interesting. They teased Ferdinand and Isabella incessantly with memorials, containing the detail of their own grievances, and the details of their charge against Columbus. Whenever either the king or queen appeared in public, they surrounded them in a tumultuary manner, insisting on importunate clamours for the payment of the arrears due to them, and demanding vengeance upon the author of their sufferings. They insulted the Admiral's sons wherever they met them, reproaching them as the offspring of the projector, whose fatal policy had discovered those pernicious regions which drained Spain of its wealth, and would prove the grave of its people. These avowed endeavours of the malcontents from America to ruin Columbus, were seconded by the secret, but more dangerous insinuations of that party among their courtiers, which always thwarted his schemes and envied his success and credit [h].

Ferdinand was disposed to listen, not only with a willing but with a partial ear, to these accusations. Withstanding the flattering accounts which Columbus had given of the riches of America, the returns from it had hitherto been so scanty, that they fell far short of defraying the expence of the ar-

[h] Life of Columbus, c. 85.

maments fitted out. The glory of the discovery, together with the prospect of remote commercial advantages, was all that Spain had yet received in return for the efforts which she had made. But time had already diminished the first sensations of joy which the discovery of a New World occasioned, and fame alone was not an object to satisfy the cold interested mind of Ferdinand. The nature of commerce was then so little understood, that, where immediate gain was not acquired, the hope of distant benefit, or of slow and moderate returns, was totally disregarded. Ferdinand considered Spain, on this account, as having lost by the enterprise of Columbus, and imputed it to his misconduct and incapacity for government, that a country abounding in gold had yielded nothing of value to its conquerors. Even Isabella, who, from the favourable opinion which she entertained of Columbus had uniformly protected him, was shaken at length by the number and boldness of his accusers, and began to suspect that a disaffection so general must have been occasioned by real grievances, which called for redress. The bishop of Badajos, with his usual animosity against Columbus, encouraged these suspicions, and confirmed them.

As soon as the queen began to give way to the torrent of calumny, a resolution fatal to Columbus was taken. Francis de Bovadilla, a knight of Calatrava, was appointed to repair to Hispaniola, with full powers to enquire into the conduct of Columbus, and if he should find the charge of mal-administration proved, to supersede him, and assume the government of the island. It was impossible to escape condemnation, when this preposterous commission made it the interest of the judge to pronounce the person whom he was sent to try, guilty. Though Columbus had now composed all the dissensions in the island; though he had brought both Spaniards and Indians to submit peaceably to his government;

though he had made such effectual provision for working the mines, and cultivating the country, as would have secured a considerable revenue to the king, as well as large profits to individuals, Bovadilla, without deigning to attend to the nature or merit of those services, discovered, from the moment that he landed in Hispaniola, a determined purpose of treating him as a criminal. He took possession of the admiral's house in St. Domingo, from which its master happened at that time to be absent, and seized his effects, as if his guilt had been already fully proved; he rendered himself master of the fort and of the king's stores by violence; he required all persons to acknowledge him as supreme governor; he set at liberty the prisoners confined by the admiral, and summoned him to appear before his tribunal, in order to answer for his conduct; transmitting to him, together with the summons, a copy of the royal mandate, by which Columbus was enjoined to yield implicit obedience to his commands.

Columbus though deeply affected with the ingratitude and injustice of Ferdinand and Isabella, did not hesitate a moment about his own conduct. He submitted to the will of his sovereigns with a respectful silence, and repaired directly to the court of that violent and partial judge whom they had authorized to try him. Bovadilla, without admitting him into his presence, ordered him instantly to be arrested, to be loaded with chains, and hurried on board a ship. Even under this humiliating reverse of fortune, the firmness of mind which distinguishes the character of Columbus, did not forsake him. Conscious of his own integrity, and solacing himself with reflecting upon the great things which he had achieved, he endured this insult offered to his character, not only with composure, but with dignity. Nor had he the consolation of sympathy to mitigate his sufferings. Bovadilla had already rendered himself



so extremely popular, by granting various immunities to the colony, by liberal donations of Indians to all who applied for them, and by relaxing the reins of discipline and government, that the Spaniards who were mostly adventurers, whom their indigence or crimes had impelled to abandon their native country, expressed the most indecent satisfaction with the disgrace and imprisonment of Columbus. They flattered themselves, that now they should enjoy an uncontrolled liberty, more suitable to their disposition and former habits of life. Among persons thus prepared to censure the proceedings, and to asperse the character of Columbus, Bovadilla collected materials for a charge against him. All accusations, the most improbable as well as inconsistent, were received. No informer, however infamous, was rejected. The result of this inquest, no less indecent than partial, he transmitted to Spain. At the same time, he ordered Columbus, with his two brothers, to be carried thither in fetters ; and adding cruelty to insult, he confined them in different ships, and excluded them from the comfort of that friendly intercourse which might have soothed their common distress. But while the Spaniards in Hispaniola viewed the arbitrary and insolent proceedings of Bovadilla with a general approbation, which reflects dishonour upon their name and country, one man still retained a proper sense of the great actions which Columbus had performed, and was touched with the sentiments of veneration and pity due to his rank, his age, and his merit. Alonso de Vallejo, the captain of the vessel on board which the admiral was confined, as soon as he was clear of the island, approached his prisoner with great respect, and offered to release him from the fetters with which he was unjustly loaded. " No," replied Columbus, with a generous indignation, " I wear these irons in consequence of an order from my sovereigns. They shall find me as obedient to this as to

their other injunctions. By their command I have been confined, and their command alone shall set me at liberty [*i*].”

Nov. 23.] Fortunately the voyage to Spain was extremely short. As soon as Ferdinand and Isabella were informed that Columbus was brought home a prisoner, and in chains, they perceived at once what universal astonishment this event must occasion, and what an impression to their disadvantage it must make. All Europe, they foresaw, would be filled with indignation at this ungenerous requital of a man who had performed actions worthy of the highest recompence, and would exclaim against the injustice of the nation, to which he had been such an eminent benefactor, as well as against the ingratitude of the princes whose reign he had rendered illustrious. Ashamed of their own conduct, and eager not only to make some reparation for this injury, but to efface the stain which it might fix upon their character, they instantly issued orders to set Columbus at liberty [Dec. 17,] invited him to court, and remitted money to enable him to appear there in a manner suitable to his rank. When he entered the royal presence, Columbus threw himself at the feet of his sovereigns. He remained for some time silent; the various passions which agitated his mind suppressing his power of utterance. At length he recovered himself, and vindicated his conduct in a long discourse, producing the most satisfying proofs of his own integrity, as well as good intention, and evidence, no less clear, of the malevolence of his enemies, who, not satisfied with having ruined his fortune, laboured to deprive him of what alone was now left, his honour and his fame. Ferdinand received him with decent civility, and Isabella with tenderness and respect. They both expressed their sorrow for what had happened, disa-

[*i*] Life of Columbus, c. 86. Herrera, dec. 1. lib. iv. c. 8—11. Gomara, Hist. c. 25. Oviedo, lib. iii. c. 6.

vowed their knowledge of it, and joined in promising him protection and future favour. But though they instantly degraded Bovadilla, in order to remove from themselves any suspicion of having authorized his violent proceedings, they did not restore to Columbus his jurisdiction and privileges as viceroy of those countries which he had discovered. Though willing to appear the avengers of Columbus' wrongs, that illiberal jealousy which prompted them to invest Bovadilla with such authority as put it in his power to treat the admiral with indignity still subsisted. They were afraid to trust a man to whom they had been so highly indebted, and retaining him at court under various pretexts, they appointed Nicholas de Ovando, a knight of the military order of Alcantara, governor of Hispaniola [*k*].

Columbus was deeply affected with this new injury, which came from hands that seemed to be employed in making reparation for his past sufferings. The sensibility with which great minds feel every thing that implies any suspicion of their integrity, or that wears the aspect of an affront, is exquisite. Columbus had experienced both from the Spaniards; and their ungenerous conduct exasperated him to such a degree, that he could no longer conceal the sentiments which it excited. Wherever he went, he carried about with him, as a memorial of their ingratitude, those fetters with which he had been loaded. They were constantly hung up in his chamber, and he gave orders that when he died they should be buried in his grave [*l*].

1501.] Meanwhile, the spirit of discovery, notwithstanding the severe check which it had received by the ungenerous treatment of the man, who first excited it in Spain, continued active and vigorous. [January] Roderigo de Bastidas, a person of distinc.

[*k*] Herrera, dec. 1. lib. iv. c. 10—12. Life of Columbus, c. 87: [*l*] Life of Columbus, c. 86. p. 577.

tion, fitted out two ships in copartnery with John de la Cosa, who having served under the admiral in two of his voyages, was deemed the most skilful pilot in Spain. They steered directly towards the continent, arrived on the coast of Paria, and proceeding to the west, discovered all the coast of the province now known by the name of Tierra Firmè, from Cape de Vela to the gulf of Darien. Not long after Ojeda, with his former associate Amerigo Vespucci, set out upon a second voyage, and being unacquainted with the destination of Bastidas, held the same course, and touched at the same places. The voyage of Bastidas was prosperous and lucrative, that of Ojeda unfortunate. But both tended to increase the ardour of discovery ; for in proportion as the Spaniards acquired a more extensive knowledge of the American continent, - their idea of its opulence and fertility increased [*m*].

Before these adventurers returned from their voyages, a fleet was equipped, at the public expence, for carrying over Ovando, the new governor, to Hispaniola. His presence there was extremely requisite, in order to stop the inconsiderate career of Bovadilla, whose imprudent administration threatened the settlement with ruin. Conscious of the violence and iniquity of his proceedings against Columbus, he continued to make it his sole object to gain the favour and support of his countrymen, by accomodating himself to their passions and prejudices. With this view, he established regulations, in every point the reverse of those which Columbus deemed essential to the prosperity of the colony. Instead of the severe discipline, necessary in order to habituate the dissolute and corrupted members of which the society was composed, to the restraints of law and subordination, he suffered them to enjoy such uncontrolled licence, as encouraged the wildest excesses. Instead of protect,

[*m*] Herrera, dec. 1. lib. iv. c. 11.

ing the Indians, he gave a legal sanction to the oppression of that unhappy people. He took the exact number of such as survived their past calamities, divided them into distinct classes, distributed them in property among his adherents, and reduced all the people of the island to a state of complete servitude. As the avarice of the Spaniards was too rapacious and impatient to try any method of acquiring wealth but that of searching for gold, this servitude became as grievous as it was unjust. The Indians were driven in crowds to the mountains, and compelled to work in the mines by masters, who imposed their tasks without mercy or discretion. Labour, so disproportioned to their strength and former habits of life, wasted that feeble race of men with such rapid consumption, as must have soon terminated in the utter extinction of the ancient inhabitants of the country [n].

The necessity of applying a speedy remedy to those disorders, hastened Ovando's departure. He had the command of the most respectable armament hitherto fitted out for the New World. It consisted of thirty-two ships, on board of which two thousand five hundred persons embarked, with an intention of settling in the country. [1502] Upon the arrival of the new governor, with this powerful reinforcement to the colony, Bovadilla resigned his charge, and was commanded to return instantly to Spain, in order to answer for his conduct. Roldan, and the other ringleaders of the mutineers, who had been most active in opposing Columbus, were required to leave the island at the same time. A proclamation was issued, declaring the natives to be free subjects of Spain, of whom no service was to be exacted contrary to their own inclination, and without paying them an adequate price for their labour. With re-

[n] Herrera, dec. 1. lib. iv. c. 11, &c. Oviedo Hist. lib. iii. c. 6. p. 97. Benzon. Hist. lib. i. c. 12. p. 51.

spect to the Spaniards themselves, various regulations were made tending to suppress the licentious spirit which had been so fatal to the colony, and to establish that reverence for law and order on which society is founded, and to which it is indebted for its increase and stability. In order to limit the exorbitant gain which private persons were supposed to make by working the mines, an ordinance was published, directing all the gold to be brought to a public smelting-house, and declaring one half of it to be the property of the crown [o].

While these steps were taking for securing the tranquillity and welfare of the colony which Columbus had planted, he himself was engaged in the unpleasant employment of soliciting the favour of an ungrateful court, and, notwithstanding all his merit and services, he solicited in vain. He demanded, in terms of the original capitulation in one thousand four hundred and ninety-two, to be reinstated in his office of viceroy over the countries which he had discovered. By a strange fatality, the circumstance which he urged in support of his claim, determined a jealous monarch to reject it. The greatness of his discoveries, and the prospect of their increasing value, made Ferdinand consider the concessions in the capitulation as extravagant and impolitic. He was afraid of entrusting a subject with the exercise of a jurisdiction that now appeared to be so extremely extensive, and might grow to be no less formidable. He inspired Isabella with the same suspicions; and under various pretexts equally frivolous and unjust, they eluded all Columbus' requisitions to perform that which a solemn compact bound them to accomplish. After attending the court of Spain for near two years, as an humble suitor, he found it impossible to remove Ferdinand's prejudices and apprehensions; and per-

[o] Solerzano *Politica Indiana*, lib. i. c. 12. Herrera, dec. 1. lib. iv. c. 12.

ceived, at length, that he laboured in vain, when he urged a claim of justice or merit with an interested and unfeeling prince.

But even this ungenerous return did not discourage him from pursuing the great object which first called forth his inventive genius, and excited him to attempt discovery. To open a new passage to the East Indies was his original and favourite scheme. This still engrossed his thoughts; and either from his own observations in his voyage to Paria, or from some obscure hint of the natives, or from the accounts given by Bastidas and de la Cosa, of their expedition, he conceived an opinion that, beyond the continent of America, there was a sea which extended to the East Indies, and hoped to find some strait or narrow neck of land, by which a communication might be opened with it and the part of the ocean already known. By a very fortunate conjecture, he supposed this strait or isthmus to be situated near the gulf of Darien.

Full of this idea, though he was now of an advanced age, worn out with fatigue, and broken with infirmities, he offered, with the alacrity of a youthful adventurer, to undertake a voyage which would ascertain this important point, and perfect the grand scheme which from the beginning he proposed to accomplish. Several circumstances concurred in disposing Ferdinand and Isabella to lend a favourable ear to this proposal. They were glad to have the pretext of any honourable employment for removing from court a man with whose demands they deemed it impolitic to comply, and whose services it was indecent to neglect. Though unwilling to reward Columbus, they were not insensible of his merit, and from their experience of his skill and conduct, had reason to give credit to his conjectures, and to confide in his success. To these considerations, a third must be added of still more powerful

influence. About this time the Portuguese fleet, under Cabral, arrived from the Indies; and, by the richness of its cargo, gave the people of Europe a more perfect idea than they had hitherto been able to form, of the opulence and fertility of the east. The Portuguese had been more fortunate in their discoveries than the Spaniards. They had opened a communication with countries where industry, arts, and elegance flourished; and where commerce had been longer established, and carried to greater extent, than in any region of the earth. Their first voyages thither yielded immediate as well as vast returns of profit, in commodities extremely precious and in great request. Lisbon became immediately the seat of commerce and wealth; while Spain had only the expectation of remote benefit, and of future gain, from the western world. Nothing, then, could be more acceptable to the Spaniards than Columbus' offer to conduct them to the east, by a route which he expected to be shorter, as well as less dangerous, than that which the Portuguese had taken. Even Ferdinand was roused by such a prospect, and warmly approved of the undertaking.

But interesting as the object of this voyage was to the nation, Columbus could procure only four small barks, the largest of which did not exceed seventy tons in burden, for performing it. Accustomed to brave danger, and to engage in arduous undertakings with inadequate force, he did not hesitate to accept the command of this pitiful squadron. His brother Bartholomew, and his second son Ferdinand, the historian of his actions, accompanied him. He sailed from Cadiz, on the ninth of May, and touched, as usual, at the Canary islands; from thence he proposed to have stood directly for the continent; but his largest vessel was so clumsy and unfit for service as constrained him to bear away for Hispaniola, in hopes of exchanging her for some ship of the fleet



that had carried out Ovando. When he arrived at St. Domingo [June 29], he found eighteen of these ships ready loaded, and on the point of departing for Spain. Columbus immediately acquainted the governor with the destination of his voyage, and the accident which had obliged him to alter his route. He requested permission to enter the harbour, not only that he might negotiate the exchange of his ship, but that he might take shelter during a violent hurricane, of which he discerned the approach from various prognostics, which his experience and sagacity had taught him to observe. On that account, he advised him likewise to put off for some days the departure of the fleet bound for Spain. But Ovando refused his request, and despised his counsel. Under circumstances in which humanity would have afforded refuge to a stranger, Columbus was denied admittance into a country of which he had discovered the existence and acquired the possession. His salutary warning, which merited the greatest attention, was regarded as the dream of a visionary prophet, who arrogantly pretended to predict an event beyond the reach of human foresight. The fleet set sail for Spain. Next night the hurricane came on with dreadful impetuosity. Columbus, aware of the danger, took precautions against it, and saved his little squadron. The fleet destined for Spain met with the fate which the rashness and obstinacy of its commanders deserved. Of eighteen ships two or three only escaped. In this general wreck perished Bovadilla, Roldan, and the greater part of those who had been the most active in persecuting Columbus, and oppressing the Indians. Together with themselves, all the wealth which they had acquired by their injustice and cruelty was swallowed up. It exceeded in value two hundred thousand *pesos*; an immense sum at that period, and sufficient not only to have screened them from any severe scrutiny into their conduct, but to have secured them a gracious reception in the Spanish court.

Among the ships that escaped, one had on board all the effects of Columbus, which had been recovered from the ruins of his fortune. Historians, struck with the exact discrimination of characters, as well as the just distribution of rewards and punishments, conspicuous in those events, universally attribute them to an immediate interposition of Divine Providence, in order to avenge the wrongs of an injured man, and to punish the oppressors of an innocent people. Upon the ignorant and superstitious race of men, who were witnesses of this occurrence, it made a different impression. From an opinion, which vulgar admiration is apt to entertain with respect to persons who have distinguished themselves by their sagacity and inventions, they believed Columbus to be possessed of supernatural powers, and imagined that he had conjured up this dreadful storm by magical arts and incantations, in order to be avenged of his enemies [*p*].

Columbus soon left Hispaniola [July 14], where he met with such an inhospitable reception, and stood towards the continent. After a tedious and dangerous voyage, he discovered Guanaia, an island not far distant from the coast of Honduras. There he had an interview with some inhabitants of the continent, who appeared in a large canoe. They appeared to be a people more civilized, and who had made greater progress in the knowledge of useful arts, than any whom he had hitherto discovered. In return to the inquiries which the Spaniards made, with their usual eagerness, concerning the places where the Indians got the gold which they wore by way of ornament, they directed them to countries situated to the west, in which gold was found in such profusion, that it was applied to the most common uses. Instead of steering in quest of a country so inviting, which would have

[*p*] Oviedo, lib. iii. c. 7, 9. Herrera, dec. 1. lib. v. c. 1, 2. Life of Columbus, c. 88.

conducted him along the coast of Yucatan to the rich empire of Mexico, Columbus was so bent upon his favourite scheme of finding out the strait which he supposed to communicate with the Indian ocean, that he bore away to the east towards the gulf of Darien. In this navigation he discovered all the coast of the continent, from Cape Gracias a Dios, to a harbour, which, on account of its beauty and security, he called Porto Bello. He searched, in vain, for the imaginary strait, through which he expected to make his way into an unknown sea ; and though he went on shore several times, and advanced into the country, he did not penetrate so far as to cross the narrow isthmus which separates the gulf of Mexico from the great southern ocean. He was so much delighted, however, with the fertility of the country, and conceived such an idea of its wealth, from the specimens of gold produced by the natives, that he resolved to leave a small colony upon the river Belem, in the province of Veragua, under the command of his brother, and to return himself to Spain [1503], in order to procure what was requisite for rendering the establishment permanent. But the ungovernable spirit of the people under his command, deprived Columbus of the glory of planting the first colony on the continent of America. Their insolence and rapaciousness provoked the natives to take arms, and as these were a more hardy and warlike race of men than the inhabitants of the islands, they cut off part of the Spaniards, and obliged the rest to abandon a station which was found to be untenable [g].

This repulse, the first that the Spaniards met with from any of the American nations, was not the only misfortune that befel Columbus ; it was followed by a succession of all the disasters to which navigation is exposed. Furious hurricanes, with violent storms

[g] Herrera, dec. i. lib. v. c. 5, &c. Life of Columbus, c. 89, &c. Oviedo, lib. iii. c. 9.

under and lightning, threatened his leaky vessels with destruction; while his discontented crew, exhausted with fatigue, and destitute of provisions, unwilling or unable to execute his commands, one of his ships perished; he was obliged to abandon another as unfit for service; and with the two which remained, he quitted that part of the continent which in his anguish he named the coast of Vexation[r], and bore away for Hispaniola. New distresses awaited him in his voyage. He was driven back by a violent pest from the coast of Cuba, his ships fell foul of another, and were so much shattered by the wreck, that with the utmost difficulty they reached America [June 24], where he was obliged to run them aground, to prevent them from sinking. The measure of his calamities seemed now to be full. He was driven ashore upon an island at a considerable distance from the only settlement of the Spaniards in America. His ships were ruined beyond the possibility of being repaired. To convey an account of his situation to Hispaniola, appeared impracticable; and without this it was vain to expect relief. His genius, fertile in resources, and most vigorous in those perilous extremities when feeble minds abandon themselves to despair, discovered the only expedient which afforded him a prospect of deliverance. He had recourse to the pitiable kindness of the natives, who considering the Spaniards as beings of a superior nature, were ever, on every occasion, to minister to their wants. From them he obtained two of their canoes, each formed out of the trunk of a single tree hollowed with care, and so mis-shapen and awkward as hardly to merit the name of boats. In these, which were fit only for creeping along the coast, or crossing from one side of a bay to another, Mendez, a Spaniard, and Fieschi, a Genoese, two gentlemen particularly attached to Columbus, gallantly offered to set out

[r] La Costa de los Contrastes.

for Hispaniola, upon a voyage of above thirty leagues [s]. This they accomplished in ten days, after surmounting incredible dangers, and enduring such fatigues, that several of the Indians who accompanied them sunk under it, and died. The attention paid to them by the governor of Hispaniola was neither such as their courage merited, nor the distress of the persons from whom they came required. Ovando, from a mean jealousy of Columbus, was afraid of allowing him to set foot in the island under his government. This ungenerous passion hardened his heart against every tender sentiment, which reflection upon the services and misfortunes of that great man, or compassion for his own fellow-citizens involved in the same calamities, must have excited. Mendez and Fieschi spent eight months in soliciting relief for their commander and associates, without any prospect of obtaining it.

During this period, various passions agitated the mind of Columbus, and his companions in adversity. At first the expectation of speedy deliverance, from the success of Mendez and Fieschi's voyage, cheered the spirits of the most desponding. After some time the more timorous began to suspect that they had miscarried in their daring attempt. [1504] At length, even the most sanguine concluded that they had perished. The ray of hope which had broke in upon them, made their condition appear now more dismal. Despair, heightened by disappointment, settled in every breast. Their last resource had failed, and nothing remained but the prospect of ending their miserable days among naked savages, far from their country and their friends. The seamen, in a transport of rage, rose in open mutiny, threatened the life of Columbus, whom they reproached as the author of all their calamities, seized ten canoes, which he had purchased from the Indians, and despising his remon-

[s] Oviedo, lib. iii. c. 9.

strances and entreaties, made off with them to a distant part of the island. At the same time the natives murmured at the long residence of the Spaniards in their country. As their industry was not greater than that of their neighbours in Hispaniola, like them they found the burden of supporting so many strangers to be altogether intolerable. They began to bring in provisions with reluctance, they furnished them with a sparing hand, and threatened to withdraw those supplies altogether. Such a resolution must have been quickly fatal to the Spaniards. Their safety depended upon the good-will of the Indians; and unless they could revive the admiration and reverence with which that simple people had at first beheld them, destruction was unavoidable. Though the licentious proceedings of the mutineers had, in a great measure, effaced those impressions which had been so favourable to the Spaniards, the ingenuity of Columbus suggested a happy artifice, that not only restored but heightened the high opinion which the Indians had originally entertained of them. By his skill in astronomy he knew that there was shortly to be a total eclipse of the moon. He assembled all the principal persons of the district around him on the day before it happened, and, after reproaching them for their fickleness in withdrawing their affection and assistance from men whom they had lately revered, he told them, that the Spaniards were servants of the Great Spirit who dwells in heaven, who made and governs the world; that he, offended at their refusing to support men who were the objects of his peculiar favour, was preparing to punish this crime with exemplary severity, and that very night the moon should withhold her light, and appear of a bloody hue, as a sign of the divine wrath, and an emblem of the vengeance ready to fall upon them. To this marvellous prediction some of them listened with the careless indifference peculiar to the people of America; others, with the credulous astonishment natural to barbarians. But

when the moon began gradually to be darkened, and at length appeared of a red colour, all were struck with terror. They ran with consternation to their houses, and returning instantly to Columbus loaded with provisions, threw them at his feet, conjuring him to intercede with the Great Spirit to avert the destruction with which they were threatened. Columbus, seeming to be moved by their entreaties, promised to comply with their desire. The eclipse went off, the moon recovered its splendour, and from that day the Spaniards were not only furnished profusely with provisions, but the natives, with superstitious attention, avoided every thing that could give them offence [1].

During those transactions, the mutineers had made repeated attempts to pass over to Hispaniola in the canoes which they had seized. But, from their own misconduct, or, the violence of the winds and currents, their efforts were all unsuccessful. Enraged at this disappointment, they marched towards that part of the island where Columbus remained, threatening him with new insults and danger. While they were advancing, an event happened, more cruel and afflicting than any calamity which he dreaded from them. The governor of Hispaniola, whose mind was still filled with some dark suspicions of Columbus, sent a small bark to Jamaica, not to deliver his distressed countrymen, but to spy out their condition. Lest the sympathy of those whom he employed should afford them relief, contrary to his intention, he gave the command of this vessel to Escobar, an inveterate enemy of Columbus, who adhering to his instructions with malignant accuracy, cast anchor at some distance from the island, approached the shore in a small boat, observed the wretched plight of the Spaniards, delivered a letter of empty compli-

[1] Life of Columbus, c. 103. Herrera, dec. 1. lib. vi. c. 5, 6. Benzon. Hist. lib. i. c. 14.

ments to the admiral, received his answer, and departed. When the Spaniards first descried the vessel standing towards the island, every heart exulted, as if the long-expected hour of their deliverance had at length arrived; but when it disappeared so suddenly, they sunk into the deepest dejection, and all their hopes died away. Columbus alone, though he felt most sensibly this wanton insult which Ovando added to his past neglect, retained such composure of mind, as to be able to cheer his followers. He assured them, that Mendez and Fieschi had reached Hispaniola in safety; that they would speedily procure ships to carry them off; but as Escobar's vessel could not take them all on board, that he had refused to go with her, because he was determined never to abandon the faithful companions of his distress. Soothed with the expectation of speedy deliverance, and delighted with his apparent generosity in attending more to their preservation than to his own safety, their spirits revived, and he regained their confidence [u].

Without this confidence, he could not have resisted the mutineers, who were now at hand. All his endeavours to reclaim those desperate men had no effect but to increase their frenzy. Their demands became every day more extravagant, and their intentions more violent and bloody. The common safety rendered it necessary to oppose them with open force. Columbus, who had been long afflicted with the gout, could not take the field. His brother, the adelantado, marched against them [May 20]. They quickly met. The mutineers rejected with scorn terms of accommodation, which were once more offered them, and rushed on boldly to the attack. They fell not upon an enemy unprepared to receive them. In the first shock several of their most daring leaders were slain. The adelantado, whose strength was equal to his courage, closed with their captain,

[u] Life of Columbus, c. 104. Hererra, dec. 1. lib. vi. c. 17,  
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wounded, disarmed, and took him prisoner [x]. At sight of this, the rest fled with a dastardly fear, suitable to their former insolence. Soon after, they submitted in a body to Columbus, and bound themselves by the most solemn oaths to obey all his commands. Hardly was tranquillity re-established, when the ships appeared, whose arrival Columbus had promised with great address, though he could foresee it with little certainty. With transports of joy, the Spaniards quitted an island in which the unfeeling jealousy of Ovando had suffered them to languish above a year, exposed to misery in all its various forms.

When they arrived at St. Domingo [Aug. 13], the governor, with the mean artifice of a vulgar mind, that labours to atone for insolence by servility, fawned on the man whom he envied, and had attempted to ruin. He received Columbus with the most studied respect, lodged him in his own house, and distinguished him with every mark of honour. But amidst those over-acted demonstrations of regard, he could not conceal the hatred and malignity latent in his heart. He set at liberty the captain of the mutineers, whom Columbus had brought over in chains, to be tried for his crimes, and threatened such as had adhered to the admiral with proceeding to a judicial inquiry into their conduct. Columbus submitted in silence to what he could not redress, but discovered an extreme impatience to quit a country which was under the jurisdiction of a man who had treated him, on every occasion, with inhumanity and injustice. His preparations were soon finished, and he set sail for Spain [Sept. 12], with two ships. Disasters similar to those which had accompanied him through life continued to pursue him to the end of his career. One of his vessels being disabled, was soon forced back to St. Domingo; the other, shattered by violent storms, sailed seven hundred leagues

[x] Life of Columbus, c. 107. Herrera, dec. 1. lib. vi. c. 11.

jury-masts, and reached with difficulty the port Lucar [December] [y].

ere he received the account of an event the most that could have befallen him, and which com-  
l his misfortunes. This was the death of his  
ness queen Isabella [Nov. 9], in whose justice,  
nity, and favour, he considered as his last re-  
e. None now remained to redress his wrongs,  
reward him for his services and sufferings, but  
nand, who had so long opposed and so often  
ed him. To solicit a prince thus prejudiced  
st him, was an occupation no less irksome than  
ess. In this, however, was Columbus doomed  
mploy the close of his days. As soon as his health  
n some degree re-established, he repaired to  
; and though he was received there with civi-  
lly decent, he plied Ferdinand with petition  
petition, demanding the punishment of his op-  
ors, and the restitution of all the privileges be-  
ed upon him by the capitulation of one thousand  
hundred and ninety-two. Ferdinand amused  
with fair words and unmeaning promises. In-  
l of granting his claims, he proposed expedients  
der to elude them, and spun out the affair with  
apparent art, as plainly discovered his intention  
it should never be terminated. The declining  
h of Columbus flattered Ferdinand with the  
s of being soon delivered from an importunate  
r, and encouraged him to persevere in this illi-  
l plan. Nor was he deceived in his expectations.  
sted with the ingratitude of a monarch whom  
ad served with such fidelity and success, exhaust-  
ith the fatigues and hardships which he had en-  
d, and broken with the infirmities which these  
brought upon him, Columbus ended his life at  
dolid on the twentieth of May, one thousand  
hundred and six, in the fifty-ninth year of his

[] Life of Columbus, c. 108. Herrera, dec. 1. lib. vi. c. 12.

age. He died with a composure of mind suitable to the magnanimity which distinguished his character, and with sentiments of piety becoming that supreme respect for religion, which he manifested in every occurrence of his life [z].

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### BOOK III.

**W**HILE Columbus was employed in his last voyage, several events worthy of notice happened in Hispaniola. The colony there, the parent and nurse of all the subsequent establishments of Spain in the New World, gradually acquired the form of a regular and prosperous society. The humane solicitude of Isabella to protect the Indians from oppression, and particularly the proclamation by which the Spaniards were prohibited to compel them to work, retarded, it is true, for some time, the progress of improvement. The natives who considered exemption from toil as supreme felicity, scorned every allurements and reward by which they were invited to labour. The Spaniards had not a sufficient number of hands either to work the mines or to cultivate the soil. Several of the first colonists, who had been accustomed to the service of the Indians, quitted the island, when deprived of those instruments, without which they knew not how to carry on any operations. Many of the new settlers who came over with Ovando, were seized with the distempers peculiar to the climate, and in a short space above a thousand of them died. At the same time, the exacting one half of the product of the mines as the royal share, was found to be a demand so exorbitant, that no adventures would engage to work them upon such terms.

[z] Life of Columbus, c. 103. Herrera, dec. 1. lib. vi. 13, 14, 15.

to save the colony from ruin, Ovando ventured to relax the rigour of the royal edicts. [1505] made a new distribution of the Indians among the Spaniards, and compelled them to labour for a fixed time, in digging the mines, or in cultivating the ground; but, in order to screen himself from the censure of having subjected them again to servitude, he enjoined their masters to pay them a certain sum as the price of their work. He reduced the share of the gold found in the mines from the one to the third part, and soon after lowered it to a rate at which it long remained. Notwithstanding the king's tender concern for the good treatment of the Indians, and Ferdinand's eagerness to improve the royal revenue, Ovando persuaded the court to approve of both these regulations [a].

But the Indians, after enjoying respite from oppression, though during a short interval, now felt the yoke of bondage to be so galling, that they made several attempts to vindicate their own liberty. This was considered as rebellion, and took arms were ordered to reduce them to subjection. When war is kindled on between nations whose state of improvement is in any degree similar, the means of defence are in some proportion to those employed in the attack; and in this equal contest such efforts must be exerted, such talents are displayed, and such passions kindled, as exhibit mankind to view in a situation more striking than interesting. It is one of the noblest functions of history, to observe and to delineate the conduct of nations at a juncture when their minds are most violently agitated, and all their powers and passions are exerted to the utmost. Hence the operations of war, and the struggles between contending states, have been the favourite subjects of historians, ancient as well as modern, and a most important article in the annals of human affairs. But in a contest between naked savages,

[a] Herrera, dec. 1. lib. v. c. 3.

and one of the most warlike of the European nations, where science, courage, and discipline on one side, were opposed by ignorance, timidity, and disorder on the other, a particular detail of events would be as unpleasant as uninteresting. If the simplicity and innocence of the Indians had inspired the Spaniards with humanity, had softened the pride of superiority into compassion, and had induced them to improve the inhabitants of the New World, instead of oppressing them, some sudden acts of violence, like the too rigorous chastisements of impatient instructors, might have been related without horror. But, unfortunately, this consciousness of superiority operated in a different manner. The Spaniards were advanced so far beyond the natives of America in improvement of every kind, that they viewed them with contempt. They conceived the Americans to be animals of an inferior nature, who were not entitled to the rights and privileges of men. In peace, they subjected them to servitude. In war, they paid no regard to those laws, which, by a tacit convention between contending nations, regulate hostility, and set some bounds to its rage. They considered them not as men fighting in defence of their liberty, but as slaves, who had revolted against their masters. Their caziques, when taken, were condemned, like the leaders of banditti, to the most cruel and ignominious punishments; and all their subjects, without regarding the distinction of ranks established among them, were reduced to the same state of abject slavery. With such a spirit and sentiments were hostilities carried on against the cazique of Higüey, a province at the eastern extremity of the island. This war was occasioned by the perfidy of the Spaniards, in violating a treaty which they had made with the natives, and it was terminated by hanging up the cazique who defended his people with bravery so far super-

to that of his countrymen, as entitled him to a better fate [b].

The conduct of Ovando, in another part of the island, was still more treacherous and cruel. The province anciently named Xaragua, which extends from the fertile plain where Leogane is now situated, to the western extremity of the island, was subject to a female cazique, named Anacoana, highly respected by the natives. She, from that partial fondness with which the women of America were attached to the Europeans, (the cause of which shall be afterwards explained,) had always courted the friendship of the Spaniards, and loaded them with benefits. But some of the adherents of Roldan having settled in her country, were so much exasperated at her endeavouring to restrain their excesses, that they accused her of having formed a plan to throw off the yoke, and to exterminate the Spaniards. Ovando, though he knew well what little credit was due to such profligate men, marched, without further inquiry, towards Xaragua, with three hundred foot and seventy horsemen. To prevent the Indians from taking alarm at this hostile appearance, he gave out that his sole intention was to visit Anacoana, to whom his countrymen had been so much indebted, in the most respectful manner, and to regulate with her the mode of levying the tribute payable to the king of Spain. Anacoana, in order to receive this illustrious guest with due honour, assembled the principal men in her dominions, to the number of three hundred, and advancing at the head of these, accompanied by a great crowd of persons of inferior rank, she welcomed Ovando with songs and dances, according to the mode of the country, and conducted him to the place of her residence. There he was feasted for some days, with all the kindness of simple hospitality, and amused with the games and spectacles usual among the Ame-

[b] Herrera, dec. 1. lib. vi. c. 9, 10.

ricans upon occasions of mirth and festivity. But, amidst the security which this inspired, Ovando was meditating the destruction of his unsuspecting entertainer and her subjects; and the mean perfidy with which he executed this scheme, equalled his barbarity in forming it. Under colour of exhibiting to the Indians the parade of an European tournament, he advanced with his troops, in battle array, towards the house in which Anacoana and the chiefs who attended her were assembled. The infantry took possession of all the avenues which led to the village. The horsemen encompassed the house. These movements were the object of admiration without any mixture of fear, until, upon a signal which had been concerted, the Spaniards suddenly drew their swords, and rushed upon the Indians, defenceless, and astonished at an act of treachery which exceeded the conception of undesigning men. In a moment Anacoana was secured. All her attendants were seized and bound. Fire was set to the house; and, without examination or conviction, all these unhappy persons, the most illustrious in their own country, were consumed in the flames. Anacoana was reserved for a more ignominious fate. She was carried in chains to St. Domingo, and, after the formality of a trial before Spanish judges, she was condemned, upon the evidence of those very men who had betrayed her, to be publicly hanged [c].

Overawed and humbled by this atrocious treatment of their princes and nobles, who were objects of their highest reverence, the people in all the provinces of Hispaniola submitted, without farther resistance, to the Spanish yoke. Upon the death of Isabella, all the regulations tending to mitigate the rigour of their servitude were forgotten. The small gratuity paid to them as the price of their labour was

[c] Oviedo, lib. iii. c. 12. Herrera, dec. 1. lib. vi. c. 4. Relacion de destruye. de las Indias, par Bart. de las Casas, p. 8.

withdrawn ; and at the same time the tasks imposed upon them were increased. [1506] Ovando, without any restraint, distributed Indians among his friends in the island. Ferdinand, to whom the queen had left by will one half of the revenue arising from the settlements in the New World, conferred grants of a similar nature upon his courtiers, as the least expensive mode of rewarding their services. They farmed out the Indians, of whom they were rendered proprietors, to their countrymen settled in Hispaniola ; and that wretched people, being compelled to labour in order to satisfy the rapacity of both, the exactions of their oppressors no longer knew any bounds. But, barbarous as their policy was, and fatal to the inhabitants of Hispaniola, it produced, for some time, very considerable effects. By calling forth the force of a whole nation, and exerting it in one direction, the working of the mines was carried on with amazing rapidity and success. During several years, the gold brought into the royal smelting-houses in Hispaniola amounted annually to four hundred and sixty thousand pesos, above a hundred thousand pounds sterling ; which, if we attend to the great change in the value of money since the beginning of the sixteenth century to the present times, must appear a considerable sum. Vast fortunes were created, of a sudden, by some. Others dissipated in ostentatious profusion, what they acquired with facility. Dazzled by both, new adventurers crowded to America, with the most eager impatience, to share in those treasures which had enriched their countrymen ; and, notwithstanding the mortality occasioned by the unhealthiness of the climate, the colony continued to increase [*d*].

Ovando governed the Spaniards with wisdom and justice, not inferior to the rigour with which he treated the Indians. He established equal laws, and, by executing them with impartiality, accustomed the

[*d*] Herrera, dec. 1. lib. vi. c. 18, &c.



people of the colony to reverence them. He founded several new towns in different parts of the island, and allured inhabitants to them, by the concession of various immunities. He endeavoured to turn the attention of the Spaniards to some branch of industry more useful than that of searching for gold in the mines. Some slips of the sugar-cane having been brought from the Canary islands by way of experiment, they were found to thrive with such increase, in the rich soil and warm climate to which they were transplanted, that the cultivation of them soon became an object of commerce. Extensive plantations were begun; sugar-works, which the Spaniards called *ingenios*, from the various machinery employed in them, were erected, and in a few years the manufacture of this commodity was the great occupation of the inhabitants of Hispaniola, and the most considerable source of their wealth [e].

The prudent endeavours of Ovando, to promote the welfare of the colony, were powerfully seconded by Ferdinand. The large remittances which he received from the New World opened his eyes, at length, with respect to the importance of those discoveries, which he had hitherto affected to undervalue. Fortune, and his own address, having now extricated him out of those difficulties in which he had been involved by the death of his queen [1507], and by his disputes with his son-in-law about the government of her dominions [f], he had full leisure to turn his attention to the affairs of America. To his provident sagacity, Spain is indebted for many of those regulations which gradually formed that system of profound, but jealous policy by which she governs her dominions in the New World. He erected a court, distinguished by the title of the *Casa de Contratacion*, or Board of Trade, composed of persons eminent for

[e] Oviedo, lib. iv. c. 8.

[f] Hist. of the Reign of Charles V. vol. ii. p. 7, &c.

rank and abilities, to whom he committed the administration of American affairs. This board assembled regularly in Seville, and was invested with a distinct and extensive jurisdiction. He gave a regular form to ecclesiastical government in America, by nominating archbishops, bishops, deans, together with clergymen of subordinate ranks, to take charge of the Spaniards established there, as well as of the natives who should embrace the Christian faith. But, notwithstanding the obsequious devotion of the Spanish court to the papal see, such was Ferdinand's solicitude to prevent any foreign power from claiming jurisdiction, or acquiring influence in his new dominions, that he reserved to the crown of Spain the sole right of patronage to the benefices in America, and stipulated that no papal bull or mandate should be promulgated there, until it was previously examined and approved of by his council. With the same spirit of jealousy, he prohibited any goods to be exported to America, or any person to settle there, without a special licence from that council [g].

But notwithstanding this attention to the police and welfare of the colony, a calamity impended which threatened its dissolution. The original inhabitants, on whose labour the Spaniards in Hispaniola depended for their prosperity, and even their existence, wasted so fast, that the extinction of the whole race seemed to be inevitable. When Columbus discovered Hispaniola, the number of its inhabitants was computed to be at least a million [h]. They were now reduced to sixty thousand in the space of fifteen years. This consumption of the human species, no less amazing than rapid, was the effect of several concurring causes. The natives of the American islands were of a more feeble constitution than the inhabitants of the other hemisphere.

[g] Herrera, dec. 1. lib. vi. c. 19, 20.

[h] Ibid. dec. 1. lib. x. c. 12.

They could neither perform the same work, nor endure the same fatigue, with men whose organs were of a more vigorous conformation. The listless indolence in which they delighted to pass their days, as it was the effect of their debility, contributed likewise to increase it, and rendered them, from habit as well as constitution, incapable of hard labour. The food on which they subsisted afforded little nourishment, and they were accustomed to take it in small quantities, not sufficient to invigorate a languid frame, and render it equal to the efforts of active industry. The Spaniards without attending to those peculiarities in the constitution of the Americans, imposed tasks upon them, which, though not greater than Europeans might have performed with ease, were so disproportioned to their strength, that many ~~sunk~~ under the fatigue, and ended their wretched days. Others, prompted by impatience and despair, cut short their own lives with a violent hand. Famine, brought on by compelling such numbers to abandon the culture of their lands, in order to labour in the mines, proved fatal to many. Diseases of various kinds, some occasioned by the hardships to which they were exposed, and others by their intercourse with the Europeans, who communicated to them some of their peculiar maladies, completed the desolation of the island. The Spaniards being thus deprived of the instruments which they were accustomed to employ, found it impossible to extend their improvements, or even to carry on the works which they had already begun. [1508] In order to provide an immediate remedy for an evil so alarming, Ovando proposed to transport the inhabitants of the Lucayo islands to Hispaniola, under pretence that they might be civilized with more facility, and instructed to greater advantage in the Christian religion, if they were united to the Spanish colony, and placed under the immediate inspection of the missionaries settled

there. Ferdinand, deceived by this artifice, or willing to connive at any act of violence which policy represented as necessary, gave his assent to the proposal. Several vessels were fitted out for the Lucayos, the commanders of which informed the natives, with whose language they were now well acquainted, that they came from a delicious country, in which the departed ancestors of the Indians resided, by whom they were sent to invite their descendants to resort thither, to partake of the bliss enjoyed there by happy spirits. That simple people listened with wonder and credulity ; and, fond of visiting their relations and friends in that happy region, followed the Spaniards with eagerness. By this artifice, above forty thousand were decoyed into Hispaniola, to share in the sufferings which were the lot of the inhabitants of that island, and to mingle their groans and tears with those of that wretched race of men [i].

The Spaniards had, for some time, carried on their operations in the mines of Hispaniola with such ardour as well as success, that these seemed to have engrossed their whole attention. The spirit of discovery languished ; and, since the last voyage of Columbus, no enterprise of any moment had been undertaken. But as the decrease of the Indians rendered it impossible to acquire wealth in that island with the same rapidity as formerly, this urged some of the more adventurous Spaniards to search for new countries, where their avarice might be gratified with more facility. Juan Ponce de Leon, who commanded under Ovando in the eastern district of Hispaniola, passed over to the island of St. Juan de Puerto Rico, which Columbus had discovered in his second voyage, and penetrated into the interior part of the country. As he found the soil to be fertile, and expected, from some symptoms, as well as from the informa-

[i] Herrera, dec. 1. lib. vii. c. 3. Oviedo, lib. iii. c. 6. Gomara, Hist. c. 41.

tion of the inhabitants, to discover mines of gold in the mountains, Ovando permitted him to attempt making a settlement in the island. This was easily effected by an officer eminent for conduct no less than for courage. In a few years Puerto Rico was subjected to the Spanish government, the natives were reduced to servitude; and, being treated with the same inconsiderate rigour as their neighbours in Hispaniola, the race of original inhabitants, worn out with fatigue and sufferings, was soon exterminated [*k*].

About the same time, Juan Diaz de Solis, in conjunction with Vincent Yanez Pinzon, one of Columbus' original companions, made a voyage to the continent. They held the same course which Columbus had taken, as far as to the island of Guanaïos; but, standing from thence to the west, they discovered a new and extensive province, afterwards known by the name of Yucatan, and proceeded a considerable way along the coast of that country [*l*.] Though nothing memorable occurred in this voyage, it deserves notice, because it led to discoveries of greater importance. For the same reason, the voyage of Sebastian de Ocampo must be mentioned. By the command of Ovando, he sailed round Cuba, and first discovered with certainty, that this country, which Columbus once supposed to be a part of the continent, was a large island [*m*].

This voyage round Cuba was one of the last occurrences under the administration of Ovando. Ever since the death of Columbus, his son Don Diego had been employed in soliciting Ferdinand to grant him the offices of viceroy and admiral in the New World, together with all the other immunities and profits which descended to him by inheritance, in conse-

[*k*] Herrera, dec. 1. lib. vii. c. 1—4. Gomara, Hist. c. 44.  
 Relacion de B. de las Casas, p. 10. [*l*] Herrera, dec. 1.  
 lib. vii. c. 17. [*m*] Ibid. dec. 1. lib. vii. c. 1.

quence of the original capitulation with his father. But if these dignities and revenues appeared so considerable to Ferdinand, that, at the expence of being deemed unjust as well as ungrateful, he had wrested them from Columbus, it is not surprising that he should be unwilling to confer them on his son. Accordingly, Don Diego wasted two years in incessant but fruitless importunity. Weary of this he endeavoured at length to obtain, by a legal sentence, what he could not procure from the favour of an interested monarch. He commenced a suit against Ferdinand before the council which managed Indian affairs, and that court, with integrity which reflects honour upon its proceedings, decided against the king, and sustained Don Diego's claim of the viceroyalty, together with all the other privileges stipulated in the capitulation. Even after this decree, Ferdinand's repugnance to put a subject in possession of such extensive rights, might have thrown in new obstacles, if Don Diego had not taken a step which interested very powerful persons in the success of his claims. The sentence of the council of the Indies gave him a title to a rank so elevated, and a fortune so opulent, that he found no difficulty in concluding a marriage with Donna Maria, daughter of Don Ferdinand de Toledo, great commendator of Leon, and brother of the duke of Alva, a nobleman of the first rank, and nearly related to the king. The duke and his family espoused so warmly the cause of their new ally, that Ferdinand could not resist their solicitations. [1509] He recalled Ovando, and appointed Don Diego his successor, though, even in conferring this favour, he could not conceal his jealousy; for he allowed him to assume only the title of governor, not that of viceroy, which had been adjudged to belong to him. <sup>1</sup> *n*.

Don Diego quickly repaired to Hispaniola, attend-

[*n*] Herrera, dec. 1. lib. vii. c. 4, &c.

ed by his brother, his uncles, his wife, whom the courtesy of the Spaniards honoured with the title of vice-queen, and a numerous retinue of persons of both sexes, born of good families. He lived with a splendour and magnificence hitherto unknown in the New World; and the family of Columbus seemed now to enjoy the honours and rewards due to his inventive genius, of which he himself had been cruelly defrauded. The colony itself acquired new lustre by the accession of so many inhabitants, of a different rank and character from most of those who had hitherto migrated to America, and many of the most illustrious families in the Spanish settlements are descended from the persons who at that time accompanied Don Diego Columbus [o].

No benefit accrued to the unhappy natives from this change of governors. Don Diego was not only authorized by a royal edict to continue the *repartimientos*, or distribution of Indians, but the particular number which he might grant to every person, according to his rank in the colony, was specified. He availed himself of that permission, and soon after he landed at St. Domingo, he divided such Indians as were still unappropriated, among his relations and attendants [p].

The next care of the new governor was to comply with an instruction which he received from the king, about settling a colony in Cubagua, a small island which Columbus had discovered in his third voyage. Though this barren spot hardly yielded subsistence to its wretched inhabitants, such quantities of those oysters which produce pearls were found on its coast, that it did not long escape the inquisitive avarice of the Spaniards, and became a place of considerable resort. Large fortunes were acquired by the fishery of pearls, which was carried on with extraordinary ardour.

[o] Oviedo, lib. iii. c. 1.      [p] Recopilacion de Leyes, lib. vi. tit. 8. l. 1, 2.      Herrera, dec. 1. lib. vii. c. 10.

The Indians, especially those from the Lucayo islands, were compelled to dive for them; and this dangerous and unhealthy employment was an additional calamity, which contributed not a little to the extinction of that devoted race [*q*].

About this period, Juan Diaz de Solis and Pinzon set out, in conjunction, upon a second voyage. They stood directly south, towards the equinoctial line, which Pinzon had formerly crossed, and advanced as far as the fortieth degree of southern latitude. They were astonished to find that the continent of America stretched on their right hand, through all this vast extent of ocean. They landed in different places, to take possession in name of their sovereign; but though the country appeared to be extremely fertile and inviting, their force was so small, having been fitted out rather for discovery than making settlements, that they left no colony behind them. Their voyage served, however, to give the Spaniards more exalted and adequate ideas with respect to the dimensions of this new quarter of the globe [*r*].

Though it was about ten years since Columbus had discovered the main land of America, the Spaniards had hitherto made no settlement in any part of it. What had been so long neglected was now seriously attempted, and with considerable vigour, though the plan for this purpose was neither formed by the crown, nor executed at the expence of the nation, but carried on by the enterprising spirit of private adventurers. This scheme took its rise from Alonso de Ojeda, who had already made two voyages as a discoverer, by which he acquired considerable reputation, but no wealth. But his character for intrepidity and conduct easily procured him associates, who advanced the money requisite to defray the charges of the expedition. About the same time,

[*q*] Herrera, dec. 1. lib. vii. c. 9. Gomara, Hist. c. 78.

[*r*] Herrera, dec. 1. lib. vii. c. 9.



Diego de Nicuessa, who had acquired a large fortune in Hispaniola, formed a similar design. Ferdinand encouraged both ; and though he refused to advance the smallest sum, was extremely liberal of titles and patents. He erected two governments on the continent, one extending from Cape de Vela to the gulf of Darien, and the other from that to Cape Gracias a Dios. The former was given to Ojeda, the latter to Nicuessa. Ojeda fitted out a ship and two brigantines, with three hundred men ; Nicuessa six vessels, with seven hundred and eighty men. They sailed about the same time from St. Domingo for their respective governments. In order to give their title to those countries some appearance of validity, several of the most eminent divines and lawyers in Spain were employed to prescribe the mode in which they should take possession of them [s]. There is not in the history of mankind any thing more singular or extravagant than the form which they devised for this purpose. They instructed those invaders, as soon as they landed on the continent, to declare to the natives the principal articles of the Christian faith ; to acquaint them, in particular, with the supreme jurisdiction of the pope over all the kingdoms of the earth ; to inform them of the grant which this holy pontiff had made of their country to the king of Spain ; to require them to embrace the doctrines of that religion which the Spaniards made known to them ; and to submit to the sovereign whose authority they proclaimed. If the natives refused to comply with this requisition, the terms of which must have been utterly incomprehensible to uninstructed Indians, then Ojeda and Nicuessa were authorised to attack them with fire and sword ; to reduce them, their wives and children, to a state of servitude ; and to compel them by force to recognize the jurisdiction of the church, and the autho-

[s] Herrera, dec. 1. lib. vii. c. 15.

city of the monarch, to which they would not voluntarily subject themselves [1].

As the inhabitants of the continent could not at once yield assent to doctrines too refined for their uncultivated understandings, and explained to them by interpreters imperfectly acquainted with their language; as they did not conceive how a foreign priest, of whom they had never heard, could have any right to dispose of their country; or how an unknown prince should claim jurisdiction over them as his subjects; they fiercely opposed the new invaders of their territories. Ojeda and Nicuessa endeavoured to effect by force what they could not accomplish by persuasion. The contemporary writers enter into a very minute detail in relating their transactions; but as they made no discovery of importance, nor established any permanent settlement, their adventures are not entitled to any considerable place in the general history of a period, where romantic valour, struggling with incredible hardships, distinguish every effort of the Spanish arms. They found the natives in those countries of which they went to assume the government, to be of a character very different from that of their countrymen in the islands. They were fierce and warlike. Their arrows were dipped in a poison so noxious, that every wound was followed with certain death. In one encounter they slew above seventy of Ojeda's followers, and the Spaniards, for the first time, were taught to dread the inhabitants of the New World. Nicuessa was opposed by people equally resolute in defence of their possessions. Nothing could soften their ferocity. Though the Spaniards employed every art to sooth them, and to gain their confidence, they refused to hold any intercourse, or to exchange any friendly office, with men whose residence among them they considered as fatal to their liberty and independence. [1510] This

[1] See NOTE XXIII.

implacable enmity of the natives, though it rendered an attempt to establish a settlement in their country extremely difficult as well as dangerous, might have been surmounted at length by the perseverance of the Spaniards, by the superiority of their arms, and their skill in the art of war. But every disaster which can be accumulated upon the unfortunate, combined to complete their ruin. The loss of their ships by various accidents upon an unknown coast, the diseases peculiar to a climate the most noxious in all America, the want of provisions, unavoidable in a country imperfectly cultivated, dissension among themselves, and the incessant hostilities of the natives, involved them in a succession of calamities, the bare recital of which strikes one with horror. Though they received two considerable reinforcements from Hispaniola, the greater part of those who had engaged in this unhappy expedition, perished, in less than a year, in the most extreme misery. A few who survived, settled as a feeble colony at Santa Maria el Antigua, on the gulf of Darien, under the command of Vasco Nugnez de Balboa, who in the most desperate exigencies, displayed such courage and conduct, as first gained the confidence of his countrymen, and marked him out as their leader in more splendid and successful undertakings. Nor was he the only adventurer in this expedition who will appear with lustre in more important scenes. Francisco Pizarro was one of Ojeda's companions, and in this school of adversity acquired or improved the talents which fitted him for the extraordinary actions which he afterwards performed. Hernan Cortes, whose name became still more famous, had likewise engaged early in this enterprise, which roused all the active youth of Hispaniola to arms; but the good fortune that accompanied him in his subsequent adventures, interposed to save him from the disasters to which his companions were exposed. He was taken ill at

St. Domingo before the departure of the fleet, and detained there by a tedious indisposition [u].

Notwithstanding the unfortunate issue of this expedition, the Spaniards were not deterred from engaging in new schemes of a similar nature. When wealth is acquired gradually by the persevering hand of industry, or accumulated by the slow operations of regular commerce, the means employed are so proportioned to the end attained, that there is nothing to strike the imagination, and little to urge on the active powers of the mind to uncommon efforts. But when large fortunes were created almost instantaneously; when gold and pearls were procured in exchange for baubles; when the countries which produced these rich commodities, defended only by naked savages, might be seized by the first bold invader; objects so singular and alluring, roused a wonderful spirit of enterprise among the Spaniards, who rushed with ardour into this new path that was opened to wealth and distinction. While this spirit continued warm and vigorous, every attempt either towards discovery or conquest was applauded, and adventurers engaged in it with emulation. The passion for new undertakings which characterises the age of discovery in the latter part of the fifteenth and beginning of the sixteenth century, would alone have been sufficient to prevent the Spaniards from stopping short in their career. But circumstances peculiar to Hispaniola at this juncture, concurred with it in extending their navigation and conquests. The rigorous treatment of the inhabitants of that island having almost extirpated the race, many of the Spanish planters, as I have already observed, finding it impossible to carry on their works with the same vigour and profit, were obliged to look out for set-

[u] Herrera, dec. I. lib. vii. c. 11, &c. Gomara, Hist. c. 57, 58, 59. Beazon, Hist. lib. i. cap. 19—23. P. Martyr, decad. 122.

lements in some country where people were not yet wasted by oppression. Others, with the inconsiderate levity natural to men upon whom wealth pours in with a sudden flow, had squandered in thoughtless prodigality, what they acquired with ease, and were driven by necessity to embark in the most desperate schemes, in order to retrieve their affairs. From all these causes, when Don Diego Columbus proposed [1511] to conquer the island of Cuba, and to establish a colony there, many persons of chief distinction in Hispaniola engaged with alacrity in the measure. He gave the command of the troops destined for that service to Diego Velasquez, one of his father's companions in his second voyage, and who having been long settled in Hispaniola, had acquired an ample fortune, with such reputation for probity and prudence, that he seemed to be well qualified for conducting an expedition of importance. Three hundred men were deemed sufficient for the conquest of an island of above seven hundred miles in length, and filled with inhabitants. But they were of the same unwarlike character with the people of Hispaniola. They were not only intimidated by the appearance of their new enemies, but unprepared to resist them. For though, from the time that the Spaniards took possession of the adjacent island, there was reason to expect a descent on their territories, none of the small communities into which Cuba was divided, had either made any provision for its own defence, or had formed any concert for their common safety. The only obstruction the Spaniards met with was from Hatuey, a cazique, who had fled from Hispaniola, and had taken possession of the eastern extremity of Cuba. He stood upon the defensive at their first landing, and endeavoured to drive them back to their ships. His feeble troops, however, were soon broken and dispersed; and he himself being taken prisoner, Velasquez, according

to the barbarous maxim of the Spaniards, considered him as a slave who had taken arms against his master, and condemned him to the flames. When Hatuey was fastened to the stake, a Franciscan friar labouring to convert him, promised him immediate admittance into the joys of heaven, if he would embrace the Christian faith. "Are there any Spaniards," says he, after some pause, "in that region of bliss which you describe?"—"Yes," replied the monk, "but only such as are worthy and good."—"The best of them," returned the indignant cazique, "have neither worth nor goodness; I will not go to a place where I may meet with one of that accursed race [*x*]." This dreadful example of vengeance struck the people of Cuba with such terror, that they scarcely gave any opposition to the progress of their invaders; and Velasquez, without the loss of a man, annexed this extensive and fertile island to the Spanish monarchy [*y*].

The facility with which this important conquest was completed, served as an incitement to other undertakings. Juan Ponce de Leon, having acquired both fame and wealth by the reduction of Puerto Rico, was impatient to engage in some new enterprise. He fitted out three ships at his own expence, for a voyage of discovery [1512], and his reputation soon drew together a respectable body of followers. He directed his course towards the Lucayo islands; and after touching at several of them, as well as of the Bahama isles, he stood to the south-west, and discovered a country hitherto unknown to the Spaniards, which he called Florida, either because he fell in with it on Palm Sunday, or on account of its gay and beautiful appearance. He attempted to land in different places, but met with such vigorous opposition from the natives, who were fierce and warlike,

[*x*] B. de las Casas, p. 40. [*y*] Herrera, dec. 1: lib. ix. c. 2, 3, &c. Oviedo, lib. xvii. c. 3. p. 179.

as convinced him that an increase of force was requisite to effect a settlement. Satisfied with having opened a communication with a new country, of whose value and importance he conceived very sanguine hopes, he returned to Puerto Rico, through the channel now known by the name of the Gulf of Florida.

It was not merely the passion of searching for new countries that prompted Ponce de Leon to undertake this voyage ; he was influenced by one of those visionary ideas, which at that time often mingled with the spirit of discovery, and rendered it more active. A tradition prevailed among the natives of Puerto Rico, that in the isle of Bimini, one of the Lucayos, there was a fountain of such wonderful virtue as to renew the youth, and recal the vigour of every person who bathed in its salutary waters. In hopes of finding this grand restorative, Ponce de Leon and his followers ranged through the islands, searching, with fruitless solicitude and labour, for the fountain, which was the chief object of their expedition. That a tale so fabulous should gain credit among simple uninstructed Indians is not surprising. That it should make any impression upon an enlightened people appears, in the present age, altogether incredible. The fact, however, is certain ; and the most authentic Spanish historians mention this extravagant sally of their credulous countrymen. The Spaniards, at that period, were engaged in a career of activity, which gave a romantic turn to their imagination, and daily presented to them strange and marvellous objects. A New World was opened to their view. They visited islands and continents, of whose existence mankind in former ages had no conception. In those delightful countries nature seemed to assume another form : every tree and plant and animal was different from those of the ancient hemisphere. They seemed to be transported into en-

chartered ground ; and, after the wonders which they had seen, nothing, in the warmth and novelty of their admiration, appeared to them so extraordinary as to be beyond belief. If the rapid succession of new and striking scenes made such impression even upon the sound understanding of Columbus, that he boasted of having found the seat of Paradise, it will not appear strange that Ponce de Leon should dream of discovering the fountain of youth [z].

Soon after the expedition to Florida, a discovery of much greater importance was made in another part of America. Balboa having been raised to the government of the small colony at Santa Maria in Darien, by the voluntary suffrage of his associates, was so extremely desirous to obtain from the crown a confirmation of their election, that he dispatched one of his officers to Spain, in order to solicit a royal commission, which might invest him with a legal title to the supreme command. Conscious, however, that he could not expect success from the patronage of Ferdinand's ministers, with whom he was unconnected, or from negotiating in a court to the arts of which he was a stranger, he endeavoured to merit the dignity to which he aspired, and aimed at performing some signal service that would secure him the preference to every competitor. Full of this idea, he made frequent inroads into the adjacent country, subdued several of the caziques, and collected a considerable quantity of gold, which abounded more in that part of the continent than in the islands. In one of those excursions, the Spaniards contended with such eagerness about the division of some gold, that they were at the point of proceeding to acts of violence against one another. A young cazique,

[z] P. Martyr, decad. p. 202. Ensayo Chronol. para la Hist. de la Florida, por. D. Gab. Cardenas, p. 1. Oviedo, lib. xvi. c. 11. Herrera, dec. 1. lib. ix. c. 5. Hist. de la Conq. de la Florida, par Garc. de la Vega, lib. i. c. 3.



who was present, astonished at the high value which they set upon a thing of which he did not discern the use, tumbled the gold out of the balance with indignation ; and, turning to the Spaniards, “ Why do you quarrel (says he) about such a trifle ? If you are so passionately fond of gold, as to abandon your own country, and to disturb the tranquillity of distant nations for its sake, I will conduct you to a region where the metal which seems to be the chief object of your admiration and desire, is so common that the meanest utensils are formed of it.” Transported with what they heard, Balboa and his companions inquired eagerly where this happy country lay, and how they might arrive at it. He informed them, that at the distance of six suns, that is of six days journey towards the south, they should discover another ocean, near to which this wealthy kingdom was situated ; but if they intended to attack that powerful state, they must assemble forces far superior in number and strength to those with which they now appeared [a].

This was the first information which the Spaniards received concerning the great southern ocean, or the opulent and extensive country known afterwards by the name of Peru. Balboa had now before him objects suited to his boundless ambition, and the enterprising ardour of his genius. He immediately concluded the ocean which the cazique mentioned, to be that for which Columbus had searched without success in this part of America, in hopes of opening a more direct communication with the East Indies ; and he conjectured that the rich territory which had been described to him, must be part of that vast and opulent region of the earth. Elated with the idea of performing what so great a man had attempted in vain ; and eager to accomplish a discovery which

[a] Herrera, dec. 1. lib. ix. c. 2. Gomara, c. 60. P. Martyr, decad. p. 149.

new would be no less acceptable to the king than  
 icial to his country, he was impatient until he  
 set out upon this enterprise, in comparison  
 ich all his former exploits appeared inconsider-

But previous arrangement and preparation  
 requisite to ensure success. He began with  
 ing and securing the friendship of the neigh-  
 ng caziques. He sent some of his officers to  
 niola with a large quantity of gold, as a proof  
 past success, and an earnest of his future hopes.  
 proper distribution of this, they secured the  
 r of the governor, and allured volunteers into  
 rvice. A considerable reinforcement from that  
 joined him, and he thought himself in a condi-  
 o attempt the discovery.

e isthmus of Darien is not above sixty miles in  
 ; but this neck of land, which binds toge-  
 he continents of North and South America, is  
 ghtened by a chain of lofty mountains stretch-  
 ough its whole extent, which rendered it a  
 r of solidity sufficient to resist the impulse of  
 opposite oceans. The mountains are covered  
 forests almost inaccessible. The valleys in that  
 climate, where it rains during two thirds of  
 ear, are marshy, and so frequently overflowed,  
 he inhabitants find it necessary, in many places,  
 ld their houses upon trees, in order to be ele-  
 at some distance from the damp soil, and the  
 s reptiles engendered in the putrid waters [b].  
 rivers rush down with an impetuous current  
 the high grounds. In a region thinly inha-  
 by wandering savages, the hand of industry  
 one nothing to mitigate or correct those na-  
 disadvantages. To march across this unex-  
 d country, with no other guides but Indians,  
 e fidelity could be little trusted, was, on all those  
 nts, the boldest enterprise on which the Spa-

[b] P. Martyr, decad. p. 158.

niards had hitherto ventured in the New World. But the intrepidity of Balboa was such as distinguished him among his countrymen, at a period when every adventurer was conspicuous for daring courage [1513]. Nor was bravery his only merit ; he was prudent in conduct, generous, affable, and possessed of those popular talents which, in the most desperate undertakings, inspire confidence and secure attachment. Even after the junction of the volunteers from Hispaniola, he was able to muster only an hundred and ninety men for his expedition. But they were hardy veterans, inured to the climate of America, and ready to follow him through every danger. A thousand Indians attended them to carry their provisions ; and to complete their warlike array, they took with them several of those fierce dogs, which were no less formidable than destructive to their naked enemies.

Balboa set out upon this important expedition on the first of September, about the time that the periodical rains began to abate. He proceeded by sea, and without any difficulty, to the territories of a cazique whose friendship he had gained ; but no sooner did he begin to advance into the interior part of the country, than he was retarded by every obstacle, which he had reason to apprehend, from the nature of the territory, or the disposition of its inhabitants. Some of the caziques, at his approach, fled to the mountains with all their people, and carried off or destroyed whatever could afford subsistence to his troops. Others collected their subjects, in order to oppose his progress, and he quickly perceived what an arduous undertaking it was, to conduct such a body of men through hostile nations, across swamps and rivers, and woods, which had never been passed but by straggling Indians. But by sharing in every hardship with the meanest soldier, by appearing the foremost to meet every danger, by promising

confidently to his troops the enjoyment of honour and riches superior to what had been attained by the most successful of their countrymen, he inspired them with such enthusiastic resolution, that they followed him without murmuring. When they had penetrated a good way into the mountains, a powerful cazique appeared in a narrow pass, with a numerous body of his subjects, to obstruct their progress. But men who had surmounted so many obstacles, despised the opposition of such feeble enemies. They attacked them with impetuosity, and having dispersed them with much ease and great slaughter, continued their march. Though their guides had represented the breadth of the isthmus to be only a journey of six days, they had already spent twenty-five in forcing their way through the woods and mountains. Many of them were ready to sink under such uninterrupted fatigue in that sultry climate, several were taken ill of the dysentery and other diseases frequent in that country, and all became impatient to reach the period of their labours and sufferings. At length the Indians assured them, that from the top of the next mountain they should discover the ocean which was the object of their wishes. When, with infinite toil, they had climbed up the greater part of that steep ascent, Balboa commanded his men to halt, and advanced alone to the summit, that he might be the first who should enjoy a spectacle which he had so long desired. As soon as he beheld the South Sea stretching in endless prospect below him, he fell on his knees, and lifting up his hands to Heaven, returned thanks to God, who had conducted him to a discovery so beneficial to his country, and so honourable to himself. His followers, observing his transports of joy, rushed forward to join in his wonder, exultation, and gratitude. They held on their course to the shore with great alacrity, when Balboa advancing up to the middle in

the waves with his buckler and sword, took possession of that ocean in the name of the king his master, and vowed to defend it, with these arms, against all his enemies [c].

That part of the great Pacific or Southern Ocean, which Balboa first discovered, still retains the name of the Gulf of St. Michael, which he gave to it, and is situated to the east of Panama. From several of the petty princes, who governed in the districts adjacent to that gulf, he extorted provisions and gold by force of arms. Others sent them to him voluntarily. To these acceptable presents, some of the caziques added a considerable quantity of pearls; and he learned from them with much satisfaction, that pearl oysters abounded in the sea which he had newly discovered.

Together with the acquisition of this wealth, which served to sooth and encourage his followers, he received accounts which confirmed his sanguine hopes of future and more extensive benefits from the expedition. All the people on the coast of the South Sea concurred in informing him that there was a mighty and opulent kingdom situated at a considerable distance towards the south-east, the inhabitants of which had tame animals to carry their burdens. In order to give the Spaniards an idea of these, they drew upon the sand the figure of the Llamas or sheep, afterwards found in Peru, which the Peruvians had taught to perform such services as they described. As the Llama, in its form, nearly resembles a camel, a beast of burden deemed peculiar to Asia, this circumstance, in conjunction with the discovery of the pearls, another noted production of that country, tended to confirm the Spaniards in their mistaken theory with respect to the vicinity of the New World to the East Indies [d].

[c] Herrera, dec. 1. lib. x. c. 1, &c. Gomara, c. 62, &c. P. Martyr, decad. p. 205, &c.

[d] Herrera, dec. 1. lib. x. c. 2.

But though the information which Balboa received from the people on the coast, as well as his own conjectures and hopes, rendered him extremely impatient to visit this unknown country, his prudence restrained him from attempting to invade it with an handful of men, exhausted by fatigue, and weakened by diseases [e]. He determined to lead back his followers, at present, to their settlement at Santa Maria in Darien, and to return next season with a force more adequate to such an arduous enterprize. In order to acquire a more extensive knowledge of the isthmus, he marched back by a different route, which he found to be no less dangerous and difficult than that which he had formerly taken. But to men elated with success, and animated with hope, nothing is insurmountable. Balboa returned to Santa Maria [1514], from which he had been absent four months, with greater glory and more treasure than the Spaniards had acquired in any expedition in the New World. None of Balboa's officers distinguished themselves more in this service than Francisco Pizarro, or assisted with greater courage and ardour in opening a communication with those countries, in which he was destined to act soon a most illustrious part [f].

Balboa's first care was to send information to Spain of the important discovery which he had made; and to demand a reinforcement of a thousand men, in order to attempt the conquest of that opulent country, concerning which he had received such inviting intelligence. The first account of the discovery of the New World hardly occasioned greater joy, than the unexpected tidings that a passage was at last found to the great Southern Ocean. The communication with the East Indies, by a course to the westward of the line of demarcation, drawn by the

[e] See NOTE XXIV. [f] Hererra, dec. 1. lib. x. c. 2—5. Gomara, c. 64. P. Martyr, dec. p. 229, &c.

pope, seemed now to be certain. The vast wealth which flowed into Portugal from its settlements and conquests in that country, excited the envy and called forth the emulation of other states. Ferdinand hoped now to come in for a share in this lucrative commerce, and in his eagerness to obtain it, was willing to make an effort beyond what Balboa required. But even in this exertion, his jealous policy, as well as the fatal antipathy of Fonseca, now bishop of Burgos, to every man of merit who distinguished himself in the New World, were conspicuous. Notwithstanding Balboa's recent services, which marked him out as the most proper person to finish that great undertaking which he had begun, Ferdinand was so ungenerous as to overlook these, and to appoint Pedrarias Davila governor of Darien. He gave him the command of fifteen stout vessels, and twelve hundred soldiers. These were fitted out at the public expence, with a liberality which Ferdinand had never displayed in any former armament destined for the New World; and such was the ardour of the Spanish gentlemen to follow a leader who was about to conduct them to a country, where, as fame reported, they had only to throw their nets into the sea and draw out gold [g], that fifteen hundred embarked on board the fleet, and if they had not been restrained, a much greater number would have engaged in the service [h].

Pedrarias reached the gulf of Darien without any remarkable accident, and immediately sent some of his principal officers ashore to inform Balboa of his arrival, with the king's commission, to be governor of the colony. To their astonishment, they found Balboa, of whose great exploits they had heard so much, and of whose opulence they had formed such high ideas, clad in a canvas jacket, and wearing coarse

[g] Herrera, dec. 1. lib. x. c. 14.  
c. 6, 7. P. Martyr, dec. p. 177, 296.

[h] Ibid. dec. 1. lib. x.

pen sandals used only by the meanest peasants, employed, together with some Indians, in thatching own hut with reeds. Even in this simple garb, which corresponded so ill with the expectations and desires of his new guests, Balboa received them with dignity. The fame of his discoveries had drawn many adventurers from the islands, that he could muster four hundred and fifty men. At the head of those daring veterans, he was more than a match for the forces which Pedrarias brought with him.

But though his troops murmured loudly at the injustice of the king in superseding their commander, and complained that strangers would now reap the fruits of their toil and success, Balboa submitted with implicit obedience to the will of his sovereign, and received Pedrarias with all the deference due to his character [i].

Notwithstanding this moderation, to which Pedrarias owed the peaceable possession of his government, he appointed a judicial inquiry to be made into Balboa's conduct, while under the command of the Pizarro, and imposed a considerable fine upon him, on account of the irregularities of which he had then been guilty. Balboa felt sensibly the mortification of being subjected to trial and to punishment in a place where he had so lately occupied the first station. Pedrarias could not conceal his jealousy of his superior merit; so that the resentment of the one, and the envy of the other, gave rise to dissensions extremely detrimental to the colony. It was threatened with a calamity still more fatal. Pedrarias had arrived in Darien at a most unlucky time of the year [i], about the middle of the rainy season, in that torrid zone where the clouds pour down torrents as are unknown in more temperate climates [k]. The village of Santa Maria was seated

Herrera, dec. 1. lib. x. c. 13, 14.

Richard Hist. Naturelle de l'Air, tom. i. p. 204.



in a rich plain, environed with marshes and woods. The constitution of Europeans was unable to withstand the pestilential influence of such a situation, in a climate naturally so noxious, and at a season so peculiarly unhealthy. A violent and destructive malady carried off many of the soldiers who accompanied Pedrarias. An extreme scarcity of provisions augmented this distress, as it rendered it impossible to find proper refreshment for the sick, or the necessary sustenance for the healthy [1]. In the space of a month, above six hundred persons perished in the utmost misery. Dejection and despair spread through the colony. Many principal persons solicited their dismissal, and were glad to relinquish all their hopes of wealth, in order to escape from that pernicious region. Pedrarias endeavoured to divert those who remained from brooding over their misfortunes, by finding them employment. With this view, he sent several detachments into the interior parts of the country, to levy gold among the natives, and to search for the mines in which it was produced. Those rapacious adventurers, more attentive to present gain than to the means of facilitating their future progress, plundered without distinction wherever they marched. Regardless of the alliances which Balboa had made with several of the caziques, they stripped them of every thing valuable, and treated them, as well as their subjects, with the utmost insolence and cruelty. By their tyranny and exactions, which Pedrarias, either from want of authority or of inclination, did not restrain, all the country from the gulf of Darien to the lake of Nicaragua was desolated, and the Spaniards were inconsiderately deprived of the advantages which they might have derived from the friendship of the natives, in extending their conquests to the South Sea. Balboa, who saw with concern that such ill-judged

[1] Herrera, dec. 1. lib. x. c. 14. P. Martyr, dec. p. 272.

ceedings retarded the execution of his favourite  
me, sent violent remonstrances to Spain against  
imprudent government of Pedrarias, which had  
ed a happy and flourishing colony. Pedrarias,  
he other hand, accused him of having deceived  
king, by magnifying his own exploits, as well as  
false representation of the opulence and value of  
country [m].

erdinand became sensible at length of his impru-  
e in superseding the most active and experienced  
r he had in the New World, and, by way of  
ensation to Balboa, appointed him *adelantado*,  
eutenant-governor of the countries upon the  
h Sea, with very extensive privileges and autho-

. At the same he enjoined Pedrarias to sup-  
Balboa in all his operations, and to consult with  
concerning every measure which he himself pur-

. [1515] But to effect such a sudden transition  
inveterate enmity to perfect confidence, exceed-  
erdinand's power. Pedrarias continued to treat  
ival with neglect; and Balboa's fortune being  
usted by the payment of his fine, and other ex-  
ns of Pedrarias, he could not make suitable pre-  
ions for taking possession of his new govern-

. At length, by the interposition and exhorta-  
of the bishop of Darien, they were brought to  
conciliation; and, in order to cement this union  
firmly, Pedrarias agreed to give his daughter  
arriage to Balboa. [1516] The first effect of  
concord was, that Balboa was permitted to make  
al small incursions into the country. These he  
ucted with such prudence, as added to the repu-  
which he had already acquired. Many adven-  
s resorted to him, and, with the countenance  
id of Pedrarias, he began to prepare for his ex-

| Herrera, dec. 1. lib. x. c. 15. dec. 2. c. 1, &c. Gomara,  
P. Martyr, dec. 3. c. 10. Relacion de B. de las Casas,

pedition to the South Sea. In order to accomplish this, it was necessary to build vessels capable of conveying his troops to those provinces which he proposed to invade. [1517] After surmounting many obstacles, and enduring a variety of those hardships which were the portion of the conquerors of America, he at length finished four small brigantines. In these, with three hundred chosen men, a force superior to that with which Pizarro afterwards undertook the same expedition, he was ready to sail towards Peru, when he received an unexpected message from Pedrarias [n]. As his reconciliation with Balboa had never been cordial, the progress which his son-in-law was making revived his ancient enmity, and added to its rancour. He dreaded the prosperity and elevation of a man whom he had injured so deeply. He suspected that success would encourage him to aim at independence upon his jurisdiction; and so violently did the passions of hatred, fear, and jealousy operate upon his mind, that, in order to gratify his vengeance, he scrupled not to defeat an enterprise of the greatest moment to his country. Under pretexts which were false, but plausible, he desired Balboa to postpone his voyage for a short time, and to repair to Acla, in order that he might have an interview with him. Balboa, with the unsuspecting confidence of a man conscious of no crime, instantly obeyed the summons; but as soon as he entered the place, he was arrested by order of Pedrarias, whose impatience to satiate his revenge did not suffer him to languish long in confinement. Judges were immediately appointed to proceed to his trial. An accusation of disloyalty to the king, and of an intention to revolt against the governor, was preferred against him. Sentence of death was pronounced; and though the judges who passed it, seconded by the whole colony, interceded warmly for his pardon, Pedrarias conti-

[n] Herrera, dec. 2. lib. i. c. 3. lib. ii. c. 11, 13, 21.

inexorable ; and the Spaniards beheld, with lament and sorrow, the public execution of a man whom they universally deemed more capable than any who had borne command in America, of executing and accomplishing great designs [o]. Upon this, the expedition which he had planned was frustrated. Pedrarias, notwithstanding the violence and injustice of his proceedings, was not only screened from punishment by the powerful patronage of the Bishop of Burgos and other courtiers, but continued in power. Soon after, he obtained permission to remove the colony from its unwholesome station of Santa Maria to Panama, on the opposite side of the straits ; and though it did not gain much in point of utility by the change, the commodious situation of this new settlement contributed greatly to facilitate the subsequent conquests of the Spaniards in the extensive countries situated upon the Southern Continent [p].

During these transactions in Darien [1515], the progress of which it was proper to carry on in an uninterrupted tenour, several important events occurred in respect to the discovery, the conquest, and government, of other provinces in the New World. Pedrarias was so intent upon opening a communication with the Molucca or Spice Islands by the west, that in the year one thousand five hundred and sixteen he fitted out two ships at his own expence, in order to attempt such a voyage, and gave the command of them to Juan Diaz de Solis, who was deemed one of the most skilful navigators in Spain. He sailed along the coast of South America, and on the 13th of January one thousand five hundred and six entered a river which he called Janeiro, where an extensive commerce is now carried on. From thence he proceeded to a spacious bay, which he sup-

[o] Herrera, dec. 2. lib. ii. c. 21, 22.

[p] Herrera, dec. 2. lib. iv. c. 1.

posed to be the entrance into a strait that communicated with the Indian Ocean; but upon advancing farther, he found it to be the mouth of Rio de Plata, one of the vast rivers by which the southern continent of America is watered. In endeavouring to make a descent in this country, De Solis and several of his crew were slain by the natives, who, in sight of the ships, cut their bodies in pieces, roasted and devoured them. Discouraged with the loss of their commander, and terrified at this shocking spectacle, the surviving Spaniards set sail for Europe, without aiming at any farther discovery [7]. Though this attempt proved abortive, it was not without benefit. It turned the attention of ingenious men to this course of navigation, and prepared the way for a more fortunate voyage, by which, a few years posterior to this period, the great design that Ferdinand had in view was accomplished.

Though the Spaniards were thus actively employed in extending their discoveries and settlements in America, they still considered Hispaniola as their principal colony, and the seat of government. Don Diego Columbus wanted neither inclination nor abilities to to have rendered the members of this colony, who were most immediately under his jurisdiction, prosperous and happy. But he was circumscribed in all his operations by the suspicious policy of Ferdinand, who on every occasion, and under pretexts the most frivolous, retrenched his privileges, and encouraged the treasurer, the judges, and other subordinate officers, to counteract his measures, and to dispute his authority. The most valuable prerogative which the governor possessed, was that of distributing Indians among the Spaniards settled in the island. The rigorous servitude of those unhappy men having been but little mitigated by all the regulations in their favour, the power of parcelling out such necessary in-

[7] Herrera, dec. 2. lib. i. c. 7. P. Martyr, decad. p. 317.

struments of labour at pleasure, secured to the governor great influence in the colony. In order to strip him of this, Ferdinand created a new office, with the power of distributing the Indians, and bestowed it upon Rodrigo Albuquerque, a relation of Zapata, his confidential minister. Mortified with the injustice, as well as indignity, of this invasion upon his rights, in a point so essential, Don Diego could no longer remain in a place where his power and consequence were almost annihilated. He repaired to Spain with the vain hopes of obtaining redress [r]. Albuquerque entered upon his office with all the rapacity of an indigent adventurer, impatient to amass wealth. He began with taking the exact number of Indians in the island, and found, that from sixty thousand, who, in the year one thousand five hundred and eight, survived after all their sufferings, they were now reduced to fourteen thousand. These he threw into separate divisions or lots, and bestowed them upon such as were willing to purchase them at the highest price. By this arbitrary distribution several of the natives were removed from their original habitations, many were taken from their ancient masters, and all of them subjected to heavier burdens, and to more intolerable labour, in order to reimburse their new proprietors. Those additional calamities completed the misery, and hastened on the extinction of this wretched and innocent race of men [s].

The violence of those proceedings, together with the fatal consequences which attended them, not only excited complaints among such as thought themselves aggrieved, but touched the hearts of all who retained any sentiments of humanity. From the time that ecclesiastics were sent as instructors into America, they perceived that the rigour with which their countrymen treated the natives, rendered their mi-

[r] Herrera, dec. 1. lib. ix. c. 5. lib. x. c. 12.

[s] Herrera, dec. 1. lib. x. c. 12.

nistry altogether fruitless. The missionaries, in conformity to the mild spirit of that religion which they were employed to publish, early remonstrated against the maxims of the planters with respect to the Americans, and condemned the *repartimientos*, or *distributions*, by which they were given up as slaves to their conquerors, as no less contrary to natural justice and the precepts of Christianity, than to sound policy. The Dominicans, to whom the instruction of the Americans was originally committed, were most vehement in testifying against the *repartimientos*. In the year one thousand five hundred and eleven, Montesino, one of their most eminent preachers, inveighed against this practice in the great church at St. Domingo, with all the impetuosity of popular eloquence. Don Diego Columbus, the principal officers of the colony, and all the lay-men who had been his hearers, complained of the monk to his superiors; but they, instead of condemning, applauded his doctrine, as equally pious and seasonable. The Franciscans, influenced by the spirit of opposition and rivalry which subsists between the two orders, discovered some inclination to take part with the laity, and to espouse the defence of the *repartimientos*. But as they could not with decency give their avowed approbation to a system of oppression, so repugnant to the spirit of religion, they endeavoured to palliate what they could not justify, and alleged, in excuse for the conduct of their countrymen, that it was impossible to carry on any improvement in the colony, unless the Spaniards possessed such dominion over the natives, that they could compel them to labour [1].

The Dominicans, regardless of such political and interested considerations, would not relax in any de-

[1] Herrera, dec. 1. lib. viii. c. 11. Oviedo, lib. iii. c. 6. p. 97.

agree the rigour of their sentiments, and even refused to absolve, or admit to the sacrament, such of their countrymen as continued to hold the natives in servitude [u]. Both parties applied to the king for his decision in a matter of such importance. Ferdinand empowered a committee of his privy-council, assisted by some of the most eminent civilians and divines in Spain, to hear the deputies sent from Hispaniola in support of their respective opinions. After a long discussion, the speculative point in controversy was determined in favour of the Dominicans, the Indians were declared to be a free people, entitled to all the natural rights of men; but, notwithstanding this decision, the *repartimientos* were continued upon their ancient footing [x]. As this determination admitted the principle upon which the Dominicans founded their opinion, they renewed their efforts to obtain relief for the Indians with additional boldness and zeal. At length, in order to quiet the colony, which was alarmed by their remonstrances and censures, Ferdinand issued a decree of his privy council [1513], declaring, that after mature consideration of the apostolic bull, and other titles by which the crown of Castile claimed a right to its possessions in the New World, the servitude of the Indians was warranted both by the laws of God and of man; that unless they were subjected to the dominion of the Spaniards, and compelled to reside under their inspection, it would be impossible to reclaim them from idolatry, or to instruct them in the principles of the Christian faith; that no farther scruple ought to be entertained concerning the lawfulness of the *repartimientos*, as the king and council were willing to take the charge of that upon their own consciences; and that therefore the Dominicans, and monks of other religious orders, should abstain, for the future, from these in-

[u] Oviedo, lib. iii. c. 6. p. 97.

[x] Herrera, dec. 1, lib. viii. c. 12. lib. ix. c. 5.



vectives, which, from an excess of charitable but ill-informed zeal, they had uttered against that practice [*y*].

That his attention of adhering to this decree might be fully understood, Ferdinand conferred new grants of Indians upon several of his courtiers [*z*]. But in order that he might not seem altogether inattentive to the rights of humanity, he published an edict, in which he endeavoured to provide for the mild treatment of the Indians under the yoke to which he subjected them; he regulated the nature of the work which they should be required to perform, he prescribed the mode in which they should be clothed and fed, and gave directions with respect to their instruction in the principles of Christianity [*a*].

But the Dominicans, who, from their experience of what was past, judged concerning the future, soon perceived the inefficacy of those provisions, and foretold, that as long as it was the interest of individuals to treat the Indians with rigour, no public regulations could render their servitude mild or tolerable. They considered it as vain to waste their own time and strength in attempting to communicate the sublime truths of religion to men, whose spirits were broken, and their faculties impaired by oppression. Some of them, in despair, requested the permission of their superiors to remove to the continent, and to pursue the object of their mission among such of the natives as were not hitherto corrupted by the example of the Spaniards, or alienated by their cruelty from the Christian faith. Such as remained in Hispaniola continued to remonstrate, with decent firmness, against the servitude of the Indians [*b*].

[*y*] Herrera, dec. 1. lib. ix. c. 14.

[*z*] See NOTE XXV.

[*a*] Herrera, dec. 1. lib. ix. c. 14.

[*b*] Herrera, dec. 1. lib. ix. c. 14. Tournon. Hist. Gener. de l'Amerique, tom. i. p. 252.

The violent operations of Albuquerque, the new distributor of Indians, revived the zeal of the Dominicans against the *repartimientos*, and called forth an advocate for that oppressed people, who possessed all the courage, the talents, and activity requisite in supporting such a desperate cause. This was Bartholomew de las Casas, a native of Seville, and one of the clergymen sent out with Columbus in his second voyage to Hispaniola, in order to settle in that island. He early adopted the opinion prevalent among ecclesiastics, with respect to the unlawfulness of reducing the natives to servitude; and that he might demonstrate the sincerity of his conviction, he relinquished all the Indians who had fallen to his own share in the division of the inhabitants among their conquerors, declaring that he should ever bewail his own misfortune and guilt, in having exercised for a moment this impious dominion over his fellow-creatures [c]. From that time, he became the avowed patron of the Indians; and by his bold interpositions in their behalf, as well as by the respect due to his abilities and character, he had often the merit of setting some bounds to the excesses of his countrymen. He did not fail to remonstrate warmly against the proceedings of Albuquerque, and, though he soon found that attention to his own interest rendered this rapacious officer deaf to admonition, he did not abandon the wretched people whose cause he had espoused. He instantly set out for Spain, with the most sanguine hopes of opening the eyes and softening the heart of Ferdinand, by that striking picture of the oppression of his new subjects, which he would exhibit to his view [d].

1516.] He easily obtained admittance to the king,

[c] Fr. Aug. Davila Padilla Hist. de la Foundation de la Provincia de St. Jago de Mexico, p. 303, 304. Herrera, dec. 1. lib. x. c. 12.

[d] Herrera, dec. 1. lib. x. c. 12. Dec. 2. lib. i. c. 11. Davila Padilla Hist. p. 304.

whom he found in a declining state of health. With much freedom, and no less eloquence, he represented to him all the fatal effects of the *repartimientos* in the New World, boldly charging him with the guilt of having authorised this impious measure, which had brought misery and destruction upon a numerous and innocent race of men, whom Providence had placed under his protection. Ferdinand, whose mind as well as body was much enfeebled by his distemper, was greatly alarmed at this charge of impiety, which at another juncture he would have despised. He listened with deep compunction to the discourse of Las Casas, and promised to take into serious consideration the means of redressing the evil of which he complained. But death prevented him from executing his resolution. Charles of Austria, to whom all his crowns devolved, resided at that time in his paternal dominions in the Low-Countries. Las Casas, with his usual ardour, prepared immediately to set out for Flanders, in order to occupy the ear of the young monarch, when cardinal Ximenes, who, as regent, assumed the reins of government in Castile, commanded him to desist from the journey, and engaged to hear his complaints in person.

He accordingly weighed the matter with attention equal to its importance; and as his impetuous mind delighted in schemes bold and uncommon, he soon fixed upon a plan which astonished the ministers, trained up under the formal and cautious administration of Ferdinand. Without regarding either the rights of Don Diego Columbus, or the regulations established by the late king, he resolved to send three persons to America as superintendants of all the colonies there, with authority, after examining all circumstances on the spot, to decide finally with respect to the point in question. It was a matter of deliberation and delicacy to choose men qualified for such an important station. As all the lay-men in America,

or who had been consulted in the administration of that department, had given their opinion that the Spaniards could not keep possession of their new settlements, unless they were allowed to retain their dominion over the Indians, he saw that he could not rely on their impartiality, and determined to commit the trust to ecclesiastics. As the Dominicans and Franciscans had already espoused opposite sides in the controversy, he, from the same principle of impartiality, excluded both these fraternities from the commission. He confined his choice to the monks of St. Jerome, a small, but respectable order in Spain. With the assistance of their general, and in concert with Las Casas, he soon pitched upon three persons whom he deemed equal to the charge. To them he joined Zuazo, a private lawyer of distinguished probity, with unbounded power to regulate all judicial proceedings in the colonies. Las Casas was appointed to accompany them, with the title of protector of the Indians [e].

To vest such extraordinary powers, as might at once overturn the system of government established in the New World, in four persons, who, from their humble condition in life, were little entitled to possess this high authority, appeared to Zapata, and other ministers of the late king, a measure so wild and dangerous, that they refused to issue the dispatches necessary for carrying it into execution. But Ximenes was not of a temper patiently to brook opposition to any of his schemes. He sent for the refractory ministers, and addressed them in such a tone, that in the utmost consternation they obeyed his orders [f]. The superintendants, with their associate Zuazo, and Las Casas, sailed for St. Domingo. Upon their arrival, the first act of their authority was to set at liberty all the Indians who had been granted to the Spanish courtiers, or to any per-

[e] Herrera, dec. 2. lib. ii. c. 3.

[f] Id. ibid. c. 6.

son not residing in America. This, together with the information which had been received from Spain concerning the object of the commission, spread a general alarm. The colonists concluded that they were to be deprived at once of the hands with which they carried on their labour, and that, of consequence, ruin was unavoidable. But the fathers of St. Jerome proceeded with such caution and prudence, as soon dissipated all their fears. They discovered, in every step of their conduct, a knowledge of the world, and of affairs, which is seldom acquired in a cloister; and displayed a moderation as well as gentleness still more rare among persons trained up in the solitude and austerity of a monastic life. Their ears were open to information from every quarter, they compared the different accounts which they received, and, after a mature consideration of the whole, they were fully satisfied that the state of the colony rendered it impossible to adopt the plan proposed by Las Casas, and recommended by the cardinal. They plainly perceived that the Spaniards settled in America were so few in number, that they could neither work the mines which had been opened, nor cultivate the country; that they depended for effecting both upon the labour of the natives, and if deprived of it, they must instantly relinquish their conquests, or give up all the advantages which they derived from them; that no allurements were so powerful as to surmount the natural aversion of the Indians to any laborious effort, and that nothing but the authority of a master could compel them to work; and if they were not kept constantly under the eye and discipline of a superior, so great was their natural listlessness and indifference, that they would neither attend to religious instruction, nor observe those rights of Christianity which they had been already taught. Upon all those accounts, the superintendants found it necessary to tolerate the *repartimientos*,

and to suffer the Indians to remain under subjection to their Spanish masters. They used their utmost endeavours however, to prevent the fatal effects of this establishment, and to secure to the Indians the consolation of the best treatment compatible with a state of servitude. For this purpose, they revived former regulations, they prescribed new ones, they neglected no circumstance that tended to mitigate the rigour of the yoke ; and by their authority, their example, and their exhortations, they laboured to inspire their countrymen with sentiments of equity and gentleness towards the unhappy people upon whose industry they depended. Zuazo, in his department, seconded the endeavours of the superintendants. He reformed the courts of justice, in such a manner as to render their decisions equitable as well as expeditious, and introduced various regulations which greatly improved the interior police of the colony. The satisfaction which his conduct, and that of the superintendants gave, was now universal among the Spaniards settled in the New World, and all admired the boldness of Ximenes, in having departed from the ordinary path of business, in forming his plan, as well as his sagacity, in pitching upon persons, whose wisdom, moderation, and disinterestedness, rendered them worthy of this high trust [g].

Las Casas alone was dissatisfied. The prudential considerations which influenced the superintendants, made no impression upon him. He regarded their idea of accommodating their conduct to the state of the colony, as the maxim of an unhallowed timid policy, which tolerated what was unjust, because it was beneficial. He contended, that the Indians were by nature free, and, as their protector, he required the superintendants not to bereave them of the common privilege of humanity. They received his most

[g] Herrera, dec. 2. lib. ii. c. 15. Remesal Hist. Gener. lib. ii. c. 14, 15, 16.

virulent remonstrances without emotion, but adhered firmly to their own system. The Spanish planters did not bear with him so patiently, and were ready to tear him in pieces for resisting in a requisition so odious to them. Las Casas, in order to screen himself from their rage, found it necessary to take shelter in a convent ; and perceiving that all his efforts in America were fruitless, he soon set out for Europe, with a fixed resolution not to abandon the protection of a people whom he deemed to be cruelly oppressed [*h*].

Had Ximenes retained that vigour of mind with which he usually applied to business, Las Casas must have met with no very gracious reception upon his return to Spain. But he found the cardinal languishing under a mortal distemper, and preparing to resign his authority to the young king, who was daily expected from the Low-Countries. Charels arrived, took possession of the government, and, by the death of Ximenes, lost a minister, whose abilities and integrity entitled him to direct his affairs. Many of the Flemish nobility had accompanied their sovereign to Spain. From that warm predilection to his countrymen, which was natural at his rage, he consulted them with respect to all the transactions in his new kingdom, and they, with an indiscret eagerness, intruded themselves into every business, and seized almost every department of administration [*i*]. The direction of American affairs was an object too alluring to escape their attention. Las Casas observed their growing influence, and though projectors are usually too sanguine to conduct their schemes with much dexterity, he possessed a bustling indefatigable activity, which sometimes accomplishes its purposes with greater success, than the most exquisite discernment and address. He courted the

[*h*] Herrera, Dec. 2. lib. ii. c. 16.

[*i*] Hist. of Charles V. vol. ii. p. 50.

Spanish ministers with assiduity. He represented them the absurdity of all the maxims hitherto adopted with respect to the government of America, particularly during the administration of Ferdinand, and pointed out the defects of those arrangements which Ximenes had introduced. The memory of Ferdinand was odious to the Flemings. The superior virtue and abilities of Ximenes had long been the object of their envy. They fondly wished to have a plausible pretext for condemning the measures, both of the monarch and of the minister, and of reflecting some discredit on their political wisdom. The friends of Don Diego Columbus, as well as the Spanish courtiers, who had been dissatisfied with the Cardinal's administration, joined Las Casas in censuring the scheme of sending superintendants to America. This union of so many interests and passions was irresistible; and in consequence of it, the monks of St. Jerome, together with their associate Pizarro, were recalled. Roderigo de Figueroa, a lawyer of some eminence, was appointed chief judge of the island, and received instructions, in compliance with the request of Las Casas, to examine once more, with the utmost attention, the point of controversy between him and the people of the colony, with respect to the treatment of the natives; and in the mean time to do every thing in his power to alleviate their sufferings, and prevent the extinction of the race [i].

This was all that the zeal of Las Casas could procure, at that juncture, in favour of the Indians. The possibility of carrying on any improvement in America, unless the Spanish planters could command the labour of the natives, was an insuperable objection to his plan of treating them as free subjects. In order to provide some remedy for this, without which he found it was in vain to mention his scheme,

[i] Herrera, dec. 2. lib. ii. c. 16, 19, 21. lib. iii. c. 7, 8.



Las Casas proposed to purchase a sufficient number of negroes from the Portuguese settlements on the coast of Africa, and to transport them to America, in order that they might be employed as slaves in working the mines and cultivating the ground. One of the first advantages which the Portuguese had derived from their discoveries in Africa, arose from the trade in slaves. Various circumstances concurred in reviving this odious commerce, which had been long abolished in Europe, and which is no less repugnant to the feelings of humanity, than to the principles of religion. As early as the year one thousand five hundred and three, a few negro slaves had been sent into the New World [*k*]. In the year one thousand five hundred and eleven, Ferdinand permitted the importation of them in greater numbers [*l*]. They were found to be a more robust and hardy race than the natives of America. They were more capable of enduring fatigue, more patient under servitude, and the labour of one negro was computed to be equal to that of four Indians [*m*]. Cardinal Ximenes, however, when solicited to encourage this commerce, peremptorily rejected the proposition, because he perceived the iniquity of reducing one race of men to slavery, while he was consulting about the means of restoring liberty to another [*n*]. But Las Casas, from the inconsistency natural to men who hurry with headlong impetuosity towards a favourite point, was incapable of making this distinction. While he contended earnestly for the liberty of the people born in one quarter of the globe, he laboured to enslave the inhabitants of another region; and in the warmth of his zeal to save the Americans from the yoke, pronounced it to be lawful and expedient to impose one still heavier upon the Africans. Unfortunately for the latter, Las Casas'

[*k*] Herrera, dec. 1. lib. v. c. 12.[*m*] Ib. lib. ix. c. 5.[*l*] Ib. lib. viii. c. 9.[*n*] Ib. dec. 2. lib. ii. c. 8.

plan was adopted. Charles granted a patent to one of his Flemish favourites, containing an exclusive right of importing four thousand negroes into America. The favourite sold his patent to some Genoese merchants for twenty-five thousand ducats, and they were the first who brought into a regular form that commerce for slaves between Africa and America, which has since been carried on to such an amazing extent [o].

1518.] But the Genoese merchants, conducting their operations, at first, with the rapacity of monopolists, demanded such an high price for negroes, that the number imported into Hispaniola made no great change upon the state of the colony. Las Casas, whose zeal was no less inventive than indefatigable, had recourse to another expedient for the relief of the Indians. He observed, that most of the persons who had settled hitherto in America were sailors and soldiers employed in the discovery or conquest of the country; the younger sons of noble families, allured by the prospect of acquiring sudden wealth; or desperate adventurers, whom their indigence or crimes forced to abandon their native land. Instead of such men, who were dissolute, rapacious, and incapable of that sober persevering industry which is requisite in former new colonies, he proposed to supply the settlements in Hispaniola and other parts of the New World with a sufficient number of labourers and husbandmen, who should be allured by suitable premiums to remove thither. These, as they were accustomed to fatigue, would be able to perform the work, to which the Indians, from the feebleness of their constitution, were unequal, and might soon become useful and opulent citizens. But though Hispaniola stood much in need of a recruit of inhabitants, having been visited at this time with the small-pox, which swept off almost all the natives

[o] Herrera, dec. 1. lib. ii. c. 20.

who had survived their long-continued oppression, and though Las Casas had the countenance of the Flemish ministers, this scheme was defeated by the bishop of Burgos, who thwarted all his projects [p].

Las Casas now despaired of procuring any relief for the Indians in those places where the Spaniards were already settled. The evil was become so inveterate there, as not to admit of a cure. But such discoveries were daily making in the continent, as gave an high idea both of its extent and populousness. In all those vast regions there was but one feeble colony planted; and except a small spot on the isthmus of Darien, the natives still occupied the whole country. This opened a new and more ample field for the humanity and zeal of Las Casas, who flattered himself that he might prevent a pernicious system from being introduced there, though he had failed of success in his attempts to overturn it, where it was already established. Full of this idea, he applied for a grant of the unoccupied country, stretching along the sea-coast, from the gulf of Paria to the western frontier of that province now known by the name of Santa Martha. He proposed to settle there with a colony composed of husbandmen, labourers, and ecclesiastics. He engaged, in the space of two years, to civilize ten thousand of the natives, and to instruct them so thoroughly in the arts of social life, that, from the fruits of their industry, an annual revenue of fifteen thousand ducats should arise to the king. In ten years he expected that his improvements would be so far advanced, as to yield annually sixty thousand ducats. He stipulated, that no sailor or soldier should ever be permitted to settle in this district; and that no Spaniard whatever should enter it without his permission. He even projected to clothe the people whom he took along with him in some distinguishing garb, which did not

[p] Herrera, dec. 2. lib. ii. c. 21.

resemble the Spanish dress, that they might appear to the natives to be a different race of men from those who had brought so many calamities upon their country [q.] From this scheme, of which I have traced only the great lines, it is manifest that Las Casas had formed ideas concerning the method of treating the Indians, similar to those by which the Jesuits afterwards carried on their great operations in another part of the same continent. He supposed that the Europeans, by availing themselves of that ascendancy which they possessed in consequence of their superior progress in science and improvement, might gradually form the minds of the Americans to relish those comforts of which they were destitute, might train them to the arts of civil life, and render them capable of its functions.

But to the bishop of Burgos and the council of the Indies this project appeared not only chimerical, but dangerous in a high degree. They deemed the faculties of the Americans to be naturally so limited, and their indolence so excessive, that every attempt to instruct or improve them would be fruitless. They contended, that it would be extremely imprudent to give the command of a country extending above a thousand miles along the coast, to a fanciful presumptuous enthusiast, a stranger to the affairs of the world, and unacquainted with the arts of government. Las Casas, far from being discouraged with a repulse, which he had reason to expect, had recourse once more to the Flemish favourites, who zealously patronized his scheme, merely because it had been rejected by the Spanish ministers. They prevailed with their master, who had lately been raised to the Imperial dignity, to refer the consideration of this measure to a select number of his privy-counsellors; and Las Casas having excepted against the members of the council of the Indies, as partial and interested,

[q] Herrera, dec. 2. lib. iv. c. 2.

they were all excluded. The decision of men chosen by recommendation of the Flemings, was perfectly conformable to their sentiments. They warmly approved of Las Casas' plan ; and gave orders for carrying it into execution, but restricted the territory allotted him to three hundred miles along the coast of Cumana, allowing him, however, to extend it as far as he pleased towards the interior part of the country [r].

This determination did not pass uncensured. Almost every person who had been in the West Indies exclaimed against it, and supported their opinion so confidently, and with such plausible reasons, as made it adviseable to pause and to review the subject more deliberately. Charles himself, though accustomed, at this early period of his life, to adopt the sentiments of his ministers, with such submissive deference as did not promise that decisive vigour of mind which distinguished his riper years, could not help suspecting that the eagerness with which the Flemings took part in every affair relating to America, flowed from some improper motive, and began to discover an inclination to examine in person into the state of the question concerning the character of the Americans, and the proper manner of treating them. An opportunity of making this inquiry with great advantage soon occurred [June 20]. Quevedo, the bishop of Darien, who had accompanied Pedrarias to the continent in the year one thousand five hundred and thirteen, happened to land at Barcelona, where the court then resided. It was quickly known, that his sentiments concerning the talents and disposition of the Indians differed from those of Las Casas ; and Charles naturally concluded that by confronting two respectable persons, who, during their residence in America, had full leisure to observe the

[r] Gomara, Hist. Gener. c. 77. Herrera, dec. 2. lib. iv. c. 3. Oviedo, lib. xix. c. 5.

manners of the people whom they pretended to describe, he might be able to discover which of them had formed his opinion with the greatest discernment and accuracy.

A day for this solemn audience was appointed. The emperor appeared with extraordinary pomp, and took his seat on a throne in the great hall of the palace. His principal courtiers attended. Don Diego Columbus, admiral of the Indies, was summoned to be present. The bishop of Darien was called upon first to deliver his opinion. He, in a short discourse, lamented the fatal desolation of America, by the extinction of so many of its inhabitants ; he acknowledged that this must be imputed, in some degree, to the excessive rigour and inconsiderate proceedings of the Spaniards ; but declared, that all the people of the New World, whom he had seen either in the continent or in the islands, appeared to him to be a race of men marked out, by the inferiority of their talents, for servitude, and whom it would be impossible to instruct or improve, unless they were kept under the continual inspection of a master. Las Casas, at greater length, and with more fervour, defended his own system. He rejected with indignation the idea that any race of men was born to servitude, as irreligious and inhuman. He asserted, that the faculties of the Americans were not naturally despicable, but unimproved ; that they were capable of receiving instruction in the principles of religion, as well as of acquiring the industry and arts which would qualify them for the various offices of social life ; that the mildness and timidity of their nature rendered them so submissive and docile, that they might be led and formed with a gentle hand. He professed, that his intentions in proposing the scheme now under consideration were pure and disinterested ; and though, from the accomplishment of his designs, inestimable benefits would result to

the crown of Castile, he never had claimed, nor ever would receive, any recompence on that account.

Charles, after hearing both, and consulting with his ministers, did not think himself sufficiently informed to establish any general arrangement with respect to the state of the Indians; but as he had perfect confidence in the integrity of Las Casas, and as even the bishop of Darien admitted his scheme to be of such importance, that a trial should be made of its effects, he issued a patent [1520], granting him the district in Cumana formerly mentioned, with full power to establish a colony there according to his own plan [s].

Las Casas pushed on the preparations for his voyage with his usual ardour. But, either from his own inexperience in the conduct of affairs, or from the secret opposition of the Spanish nobility, who universally dreaded the success of an institution that might rob them of the industrious and useful hands which cultivated their estates, his progress in engaging husbandmen and labourers was extremely slow, and he could not prevail on more than two hundred to accompany him to Cumana.

Nothing, however, could damp his zeal. With this slender train, hardly sufficient to take possession of such a large territory, and altogether unequal to any effectual attempt towards civilizing its inhabitants, he set sail. The first place at which he touched was the island of Puerto Rico. There he received an account of a new obstacle to the execution of his scheme, more insuperable than any he had hitherto encountered. When he left America in the year one thousand five hundred and sixteen, the Spaniards had little intercourse with any part of the continent, except the countries adjacent to the gulf of Darien. But as every species of internal indus-

[s] Herrera, dec. 2. lib. iv. c. 3, 4, 5. Argensola Annales d'Aragon, 74. 97. Remisal Hist. Gener. lib. ii. c. 19, 20.

try began to stagnate in Hispaniola, when, by the rapid decrease of the natives, the Spaniards were deprived of those hands with which they had hitherto carried on their operations, this prompted them to try various expedients for supplying that loss. Considerable numbers of negroes were imported; but on account of their exorbitant price, many of the planters could not afford to purchase them. In order to procure slaves at an easier rate, some of the Spaniards in Hispaniola fitted out vessels to cruize along the coast of the continent. In places where they found themselves inferior in strength, they traded with the natives, and gave European toys in exchange for the plates of gold worn by them as ornaments; but wherever they could surprise or overpower the Indians, they carried them off by force, and sold them as slaves [t]. In those predatory excursions, such atrocious acts of violence and cruelty had been committed, that the Spanish name was held in detestation all over the continent. Whenever any ships appeared, the inhabitants either fled to the woods, or rushed down to the shore in arms, to repel those hated disturbers of their tranquillity. They forced some parties of the Spaniards to retreat with precipitation; they cut off others; and in the violence of their resentment against the whole nation, they murdered two Dominican missionaries, whose zeal had prompted them to settle in the province of Cumana [u]. This outrage against persons revered for their sanctity, excited such indignation among the people of Hispaniola, who, notwithstanding all their licentious and cruel proceedings, were possessed with a wonderful zeal for religion, and a superstitious respect for its ministers, that they determined to inflict exemplary punishment, not only upon the perpetrators of that crime, but upon the whole race.

[t] Herrera, dec. 3. lib. ii. c. 3.

[u] Oviedo, Hist. lib. xix. c. 3.



With this view, they gave the command of five ships and three hundred men to Diego Ocampo, with orders to lay waste all the country of Cumana with fire and sword, and to transport all the inhabitants as slaves to Hispaniola. This armament Las Casas found at Puerto Rico, in its way to the continent; and as Ocampo refused to defer his voyage, he immediately perceived that it would be impossible to attempt the execution of his pacific plan in a country destined to be the seat of war and desolation [x.]

In order to provide against the effects of this unfortunate incident, he set sail directly for St. Domingo [12th April], leaving his followers cantoned out among the planters in Puerto Rico. From many concurring causes, the reception which Las Casas met with in Hispaniola was very unfavourable. In his negotiations for the relief of the Indians, he had censured the conduct of his countrymen settled there with such honest severity as rendered him universally odious to them. They considered their own ruin as the inevitable consequence of his success. They were now elated with hope of receiving a large recruit of slaves from Cumana, which must be relinquished if Las Casas were assisted in settling his projected colony there. Figueroa, in consequence of the instructions which he had received in Spain had made an experiment concerning the capacity of the Indians, that was represented as decisive against the system of Las Casas. He collected in Hispaniola a good number of the natives and settled them in twelve villages, leaving them at perfect liberty, and with the uncontrolled direction of their own actions. But that people, accustomed to a mode of life extremely different from that which takes place wherever civilization had made any considerable progress, were incapable of assuming new habits at once. Dejected

[x] Herrera, dec. 2. lib. ix. c. 8, 9.

with their own misfortunes as well as those of their country, they exerted so little industry in cultivating the ground, appeared so devoid of solicitude or foresight in providing for their own wants, and were such strangers to arrangement in conducting their affairs, that the Spaniards pronounced them incapable of being formed to live like men in social life, and considered them as children, who should be kept under the perpetual tutelage of persons superior to themselves in wisdom and sagacity [*y.*]

Notwithstanding all those circumstances, which alienated the persons in Hispaniola, to whom Las Casas applied from himself and from his measures, he, by his activity and perseverance, by some concessions, and many threats, obtained at length a small body of troops to protect him and his colony at their first landing. But upon his return to Puerto Rico, he found that the diseases of the climate had been fatal to several of his people; and that others having got employment in that island, refused to follow him. With the handful that remained, he set sail and landed in Cumana. Ocampo had executed his commission in that province with such barbarous rage, having massacred many of the inhabitants, sent others in chains to Hispaniola, and forced the rest to fly for shelter to the woods, that the people of a small colony, which he had planted at a place which he named *Toledo*, were ready to perish for want in a desolated country. There, however, Las Casas was obliged to fix his residence, though deserted both by the troops appointed to protect him, and by those under the command of Ocampo, who foresaw and dreaded the calamities to which he must be exposed in that wretched station. He made the best provision in his power for the safety and subsistence of his followers; but as his utmost efforts availed little towards securing either the one or the other,

[*y*] Herrera, dec. 2. lib. x. c. 5.

he returned to Hispaniola, in order to solicit more effectual aid for the preservation of men, who from confidence in him had ventured into a post of so much danger. Soon after his departure, the natives, having discovered the feeble and defenceless state of the Spaniards, assembled secretly, attacked them with the fury natural to men exasperated by many injuries, cut off a good number, and compelled the rest to fly in the utmost consternation to the island of Cubagua. The small colony settled there, on account of the pearl fishery, catching the panic with which their countrymen had been seized, abandoned the island, and not a Spaniard remained in any part of the continent, or adjacent islands, from the gulf of Paria to the borders of Darien. Astonished at such a succession of disasters, Las Casas was ashamed to shew his face after this fatal termination of all his splendid schemes. He shut himself up in the convent of the Dominicans at St. Domingo, and soon after assumed the habit of that order [z].

Though the expulsion of the colony from Cumana happened in the year one thousand five hundred and twenty-one, I have chosen to trace the progress of Las Casas' negotiations from their first rise to their final issue without interruption. His system was the object of long and attentive discussion; and though his efforts in behalf of the oppressed Americans, partly from his own rashness and imprudence, and partly from the malevolent opposition of his adversaries, were not attended with that success which he promised with too sanguine confidence, great praise is due to his humane activity, which gave rise to various regulations that were of some benefit to that unhappy people. I return now to the history of the

[z] Herrera, dec. 2. lib. x. c. 5. dec. 3. lib. ii. c. 3, 4, 5. Oviedo, Hist. lib. xix. c. 5. Gomara, c. 77. Davila Padilla, lib. i. c. 97. Remisal Hist. Gen. lib. xi. c. 22, 23.

Spanish discoveries, as they occur in the order of time [*a*].

Diego Velasquez, who conquered Cuba in the year one thousand five hundred and eleven, still retained the government of that island, as the deputy of Don Diego Columbus, though he seldom acknowledged his superior, and aimed at rendering his own authority altogether independent [*b*]. Under his prudent administration, Cuba became one of the most flourishing of the Spanish settlements. The fame of this allured thither many persons from the other colonies, in hopes of finding either some permanent establishment or some employment for their activity. As Cuba lay to the west of all the islands occupied by the Spaniards, and as the ocean, which stretches beyond it towards that quarter, had not hitherto been explored, these circumstances naturally invited the inhabitants to attempt new discoveries. An expedition for this purpose, in which activity and resolution might conduct to sudden wealth, was more suited to the genius of the age, than the patient industry requisite in clearing ground and manufacturing sugar. Instigated by this spirit, several officers, who had served under Pedrarias in Darien, entered into an association to undertake a voyage of discovery. They persuaded Francisco Hernandez Cordova, an opulent planter in Cuba, and a man of distinguished courage, to join with them in the adventure, and chose him to be their commander. Velasquez not only approved of the design, but assisted in carrying it on. As the veterans from Darien were extremely indigent, he and Cordova advanced money for purchasing three small vessels, and furnishing them with every thing requisite either for traffic or for war. A hundred and ten men embarked on board of them, and sailed from St. Jago

[*a*] Herrera, dec. 2. lib. x. c. 5. p. 329.

[*b*] Ibid. lib. ii. c. 19.

de Cuba, on the eighth of February one thousand five hundred and seventeen. By the advice of their chief pilot, Antonio Alaminos, who had served under the first admiral Columbus, they stood directly west; relying on the opinion of that great navigator, who uniformly maintained that a westerly course would lead to the most important discoveries.

On the twenty-first day after their departure from St. Jago, they saw land, which proved to be *Cape Catoche*, the eastern point of that large peninsula projecting from the continent of America, which still retains its original name of *Yucatan*. As they approached the shore, five canoes came off full of people decently clad in cotton garments; an astonishing spectacle to the Spaniards, who had found every other part of America, possessed by naked savages. Cordova endeavoured by small presents to gain the good-will of these people. They, though amazed at the strange objects now presented for the first time to their view, invited the Spaniards to visit their habitations, with an appearance of cordiality. They landed accordingly, and as they advanced into the country, they observed with new wonder some large houses built with stone. But they soon found that, if the people of Yucatan had made progress in improvement beyond their countrymen, they were likewise more artful and warlike. For though the cazique received Cordova with many tokens of friendship, he had posted a considerable body of his subjects in ambush behind a thicket, who, upon a signal given by him, rushed out and attacked the Spaniards with great boldness, and some degree of martial order. At the first flight of their arrows, fifteen of the Spaniards were wounded; but the Indians were struck with such terror by the sudden explosion of the fire-arms, and so surprised at the execution done by them, by the cross-bows, and by the other weapons of their new enemies, that they

fled precipitately. Cordova quitted a country where he had met with such a fierce reception, carrying off two prisoners, together with the ornaments of a small temple, which he plundered in his retreat.

He continued his course towards the west, without losing sight of the coast, and on the sixteenth day arrived at Campeachy. There the natives received them more hospitably ; but the Spaniards were much surprised, that on all the extensive coast along which they had sailed, and which they imagined to be a large island, they had not observed any river [c]. As their water began to fail, they advanced, in hopes of finding a supply ; and at length they discovered the mouth of a river at Potonchan, some leagues beyond Campeachy.

Cordova landed all his troops in order to protect the sailors while employed in filling the casks ; but notwithstanding this precaution, the natives rushed down upon them with such fury, and in such numbers, that forty-seven of the Spaniards were killed upon the spot, and one man only of the whole body escaped unhurt. Their commander though wounded in twelve different places, directed the retreat with presence of mind equal to the courage with which he had led them on in the engagement, and with much difficulty they regained their ships. After this fatal repulse, nothing remained but to hasten back to Cuba with their shattered forces. In their passage thither they suffered the most exquisite distress for want of water, that men wounded and sickly, shut up in small vessels, and exposed to the heat of the torrid zone, can be supposed to endure. Some of them, sinking under these calamities, died by the way ; Cordova, their commander, expired soon after they landed in Cuba [d].

[c] See NOTE XXVI.

[d] Herrera, dec. 2. lib. ii. c. 17, 18. *Histor. Verdadera de la Conquista de la Nueva Espana* por Bernal Diaz del Castillo,

Notwithstanding the disastrous conclusion of this expedition, it contributed rather to animate than to damp a spirit of enterprise among the Spaniards. They had discovered an extensive country, situated at no great distance from Cuba, fertile in appearance, and possessed by a people far superior in improvement to any hitherto known in America. Though they had carried on little commercial intercourse with the natives, they had brought off some ornaments of gold, not considerable in value, but of singular fabric. These circumstances, related with the exaggeration natural to men desirous of heightening the merit of their own exploits, were more than sufficient to excite romantic hopes and expectations. Great numbers offered to engage in a new expedition. Velasquez, solicitous to distinguish himself by some service so meritorious as might entitle him to claim the government of Cuba independent of the admiral, not only encouraged their ardour, but at his own expence fitted out four ships for the voyage. Two hundred and forty volunteers, among whom were several persons of rank and fortune, embarked in this enterprise. The command of it was given to Juan de Grijalva, a young man of known merit and courage, with instructions to observe attentively the nature of the countries, which he should discover, to barter for gold, and, if circumstances were inviting, to settle a colony in some proper station. He sailed from St. Jago de Cuba on the eighth of April one thousand five hundred and eighteen. The pilot Alaminos held the same course as in the former voyage; but the violence of the currents carrying the ships to the south, the first land which they made was the island of *Cozumel*, to the east of Yucatan. As all the inhabitants fled to the woods and mountains at the approach of the Spaniards, they

cap. 1—7. Oviedo, lib. xvii. c. 3. Gomara, c. 52. P. Martyr de Insulis nuper inventis, p. 329.

made no long stay there, and without any remarkable occurrence they reached Potonchan on the opposite side of the peninsula. The desire of avenging their countrymen who had been slain there, concerned with their ideas of good policy, in prompting them to land, that they might chastise the Indians of that district with such exemplary rigour, as would strike terror into all the people around them. But though they disembarked all their troops, and carried ashore some field-pieces, the Indians fought with such courage, that the Spaniards gained the victory with difficulty, and were confirmed in their opinion, that the inhabitants of this country would prove more formidable enemies than any they had met with in other parts of America. From Potonchan, they continued their voyage towards the west, keeping as near as possible to the shore, and casting anchor every evening, from dread of the dangerous accidents to which they might be exposed in an unknown sea. During the day, their eyes were turned continually towards land, with a mixture of surprise and wonder at the beauty of the country, as well as the novelty of the objects which they beheld. Many villages were scattered along the coast, in which they could distinguish houses of stone that appeared white and lofty at a distance. In the warmth of their admiration, they fancied these to be cities adorned with towers and pinnacles; and one of the soldiers happening to remark that this country resembled Spain in its appearance, Grijalva, with universal applause, called it *New Spain*, the name which still distinguishes this extensive and opulent province of the Spanish empire in America [e]. They landed in a river which the natives called *Tabasco* [June 9], and the fame of their victory at Potonchan having reached this place, the cazique not only received them amicably, but bestowed pre-

[e] See NOTE XXVII.



sents upon them of such value, as confirmed the high ideas which the Spaniards had formed with respect to the wealth and fertility of the country. These ideas were raised still higher by what occurred at the place where they next touched. This was considerably to the west of Tabasco, in the province since known by the name of Guaxaca. There they were received with the respect paid to superior beings. The people perfumed them as they landed, with incense of gum copal, and presented to them as offerings the choicest delicacies of their country. They were extremely fond of trading with their new visitants, and in six days the Spaniards obtained ornaments of gold, of curious workmanship, to the value of fifteen thousand pesos, in exchange for European toys of small price. The two prisoners whom Cordova had brought from Yucatan, had hitherto served as interpreters; but as they did not understand the language of this country, the Spaniards learned from the natives by signs, that they were subjects of a great monarch called Montezuma, whose dominion extended over that and many other provinces. Leaving this place, with which he had so much reason to be pleased, Grijalva continued his course towards the west. He landed on a small island [June 19], which he named the Isle of Sacrifices, because there the Spaniards beheld, for the first time, the horrid spectacle of human victims, which the barbarous superstition of the natives offered to their gods. He touched at another small island, which he called St. Juan de Ulua. From this place he dispatched Pedro de Alvarado, one of his officers, to Velasquez, with a full account of the important discoveries which he had made, and with all the treasure that he had acquired by trafficking with the natives. After the departure of Alvarado, he himself, with the remaining vessels, proceeded along the coast as far as the

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river Panuco, the country still appearing to be well peopled, fertile, and opulent.

Several of Grijalva's officers contended, that it was not enough to have discovered those delightful regions, or to have performed, at their different landing-places, the empty ceremony of taking possession of them for the crown of Castile, and that their glory was incomplete, unless they planted a colony in some proper station, which might not only secure the Spanish nation a footing in the country, but, with the reinforcements which they were certain of receiving, might gradually subject the whole to the dominion of their sovereign. But the squadron had now been above five months at sea; the greatest part of their provisions was exhausted, and what remained of their stores so much corrupted by the heat of the climate, as to be almost unfit for use; they had lost some men by death; others were sickly; the country was crowded with people who seemed to be intelligent as well as brave; and they were under the government of one powerful monarch, who could bring them to act against their invaders with united force. To plant a colony under so many circumstances of disadvantage, appeared a scheme too perilous to be attempted. Grijalva, though possessed both of ambition and courage, was destitute of the superior talents capable of forming or executing such a great plan. He judged it more prudent to return to Cuba, having fulfilled the purpose of his voyage, and accomplished all that the armament which he commanded enabled him to perform. He returned to St. Jago de Cuba on the twenty-sixth of October, from which he had taken his departure about six months before [f].

This was the longest as well as the most successful voyage which the Spaniards had hitherto made in

[f] Herrera, dec. 11. lib. iii. c. 1, 2, 9, 10. Bernal Diaz, c. 8, 17. Oviedo, Hist. lib. xvii. c. 9, 20. Gomara, c. 49.

the New World. They had discovered that Yucatan was not an island as they had supposed, but part of the great continent of America. From Potonchan they had pursued their course for many hundred miles along a coast formerly unexplored, stretching at first towards the west, and then turning to the north; all the country which they had discovered appeared to be no less valuable than extensive. As soon as Alvarado reached Cuba, Velasquez, transported with success so far beyond his most sanguine expectations, immediately dispatched a person of confidence to carry this important intelligence to Spain, to exhibit the rich productions of the countries which had been discovered by his means, and to solicit such an increase of authority as might enable and encourage him to attempt the conquest of them. Without waiting for the return of his messenger, or for the arrival of Grijalva, of whom he was become so jealous or distrustful that he resolved no longer to employ him, he began to prepare such a powerful armament, as might prove equal to an enterprise of so much danger and importance.

But as the expedition upon which Velasquez was now intent, terminated in conquests of greater moment than what the Spaniards had hitherto achieved, and led them to the knowledge of a people, who, if compared with those tribes of America, with whom they were hitherto acquainted, may be considered as highly civilized; it is proper to pause before we proceed to the history of events extremely different from those which we have already related, in order to take a view of the state of the New World when first discovered, and to contemplate the policy and manners of the rude uncultivated tribes that occupied all the parts of it with which the Spaniards were at this time acquainted.

## BOOK IV.

**T**WENTY-SIX years had elapsed since Columbus conducted the people of Europe to the New World. During that period the Spaniards had made great progress in exploring its various regions. They had visited all the islands scattered in different clusters through that part of the ocean which flows in between North and South America. They had sailed along the eastern coast of the continent from the river de la Plata to the bottom of the Mexican gulf, and had found that it stretched without interruption through this vast portion of the globe. They had discovered the great Southern Ocean, which opened new prospects in that quarter. They had acquired some knowledge of the coast of Florida, which led them to observe the continent as it extended in an opposite direction ; and though they pushed their discoveries no farther towards the north, other nations had visited those parts which they neglected. The English, in a voyage, the motives and success of which shall be related in another part of this History, had sailed along the coast of America from Labrador to the confines of Florida ; and the Portuguese, in quest of a shorter passage to the East Indies, had ventured into the northern seas, and viewed the same regions [a]. Thus, at the period where I have chosen to take a view of the state of the New World, its extent was known almost from its northern extremity to thirty-five degrees south of the Equator. The countries which stretch from thence to the southern boundary of America, the great empire of Peru, and the interior state of the extensive dominions subject to the sovereigns of Mexico, were still undiscovered.

[a] Herrera, dec. 1. lib. vi. c. 16.

When we contemplate the New World, the first circumstance that strikes us is its immense extent. It was not a small portion of the earth, so inconsiderable, that it might have escaped the observation or research of former ages, which Columbus discovered. He made known a new hemisphere, larger than either Europe, or Asia, or Africa; the three noted divisions of the ancient continent, and not much inferior in dimensions to a third part of the habitable globe.

America is remarkable not only for its magnitude, but for its position. It stretches from the northern polar circle to a high southern latitude, above fifteen hundred miles beyond the farthest extremity of the old continent on that side of the line. A country of such extent passes through all the climates capable of becoming the habitation of man, and fit for yielding the various productions peculiar either to the temperate or to the torrid regions of the earth.

Next to the extent of the New World, the grandeur of the objects which it presents to view is most apt to strike the eye of an observer. Nature seems here to have carried on her operations upon a larger scale, and with a bolder hand, and to have distinguished the features of this country by a peculiar magnificence. The mountains of America are much superior in height to those in the other divisions of the globe. Even the plain of Quito, which may be considered as the base of the Andes, is elevated farther above the sea than the top of the Pyrenees. This stupenduous ridge of the Andes, no less remarkable for extent than elevation, rises in different places more than one third above the Pike of Teneriffe, the highest land in the ancient hemisphere. The Andes may literally be said to hide their heads in the clouds; the storms often roll, and the thunder bursts below their summits, which, though exposed to the

rays of the sun in the centre of the torrid zone, are covered with everlasting snows [b].

From these lofty mountains descend rivers, proportionably large, with which the streams in the ancient continent are not to be compared, either for length of course, or the vast body of water which they roll towards the ocean. The Maragnon, the Orinoco, the Plata in South America, the Mississippi and St. Laurence in North America, flow in such spacious channels, that, long before they feel the influence of the tide, they resemble arms of the sea rather than rivers of fresh water [c].

The lakes of the New World are no less conspicuous for grandeur than its mountains and rivers. There is nothing in other parts of the globe which resembles the prodigious chain of lakes in North America. They may properly be termed inland seas of fresh water ; and even those of the second or third class in magnitude, are of larger circuit (the Caspian Sea excepted) than the greatest lake of the ancient continent.

The New World is of a form extremely favourable to commercial intercourse. When a continent is formed, like Africa, of one vast solid mass, unbroken by arms of the sea penetrating into its interior parts, with few large rivers, and those at a considerable distance from each other, the greater part of it seems destined to remain for ever uncivilized, and to be debarred from any active or enlarged communication with the rest of mankind. When, like Europe, a continent is opened by inlets of the ocean of great extent, such as the Mediterranean and Baltic ; or when, like Asia, its coast is broken by deep bays advancing far into the country, such as the Black Sea, the gulfs of Arabia, of Persia, of Bengal, of Siam, and of Leotang ; when the surrounding seas are filled with large and fertile islands, and the

[b] See NOTE XXVIII.

[c] See NOTE XXIX.

continent itself watered with a variety of navigable rivers, those regions may be said to possess whatever can facilitate the progress of their inhabitants in commerce and improvement. In all these respects America may bear a comparison with the other quarters of the globe. The gulf of Mexico, which flows in between North and South America, may be considered as a Mediterranean sea, which opens a maritime commerce with all the fertile countries by which it is encircled. The islands scattered in it are inferior only to those in the Indian Archipelago, in number, in magnitude, and in value. As we stretch along the northern division of the American hemisphere, the Bay of Chesapeak presents a spacious inlet, which conducts the navigator far into the interior parts of provinces no less fertile than extensive ; and if ever the progress of culture and population shall mitigate the extreme rigour of the climate in the more northern districts of America, Hudson's Bay may become as subservient to commercial intercourse in that quarter of the globe, as the Baltic is in Europe. The other great portion of the New World is encompassed on every side by the sea, except one narrow neck, which separates the Atlantic from the Pacific Ocean ; and though it be not opened by spacious bays or arms of the sea, its interior parts are rendered accessible by a number of large rivers, fed by so many auxiliary streams, flowing in such various directions, that, almost without any aid from the hand of industry and art, an inland navigation may be carried on through all the provinces from the river De la Plata to the gulf of Paria. Nor is this bounty of Nature confined to the southern division of America ; its northern continent abounds no less in rivers which are navigable almost to their sources, and by its immense chain of lakes provision is made for an inland communication, more extensive and commodious than in any quarter of the

globe. The countries stretching from the gulf of Darien on one side, to that of California on the other, which form the chain that binds the two parts of the American continent together, are not destitute of peculiar advantages. Their coast on one side is washed by the Atlantic Ocean, on the other by the Pacific. Some of their rivers flow into the former, some into the latter, and secure to them all the commercial benefits that may result from a communication with both.

But what most distinguishes America from other parts of the earth, is the peculiar temperature of its climate, and the different laws to which it is subject with respect to the distribution of heat and cold. We cannot determine with precision the portion of heat felt in any part of the globe, merely by measuring its distance from the equator. The climate of a country is affected, in some degree, by its elevation above the sea, by the extent of continent, by the nature of the soil, the height of adjacent mountains, and many other circumstances. The influence of these, however, is, from various causes, less considerable in the greater part of the ancient continent; and from knowing the position of any country there, we can pronounce with greater certainty, what will be the warmth of its climate, and the nature of its productions.

The maxims which are founded upon observation of our hemisphere will not apply to the other. In the New World, cold predominates. The rigour of the frigid zone extends over half of those regions, which should be temperate by their position. Countries where the grape and the fig should ripen, are buried under snow one half of the year; and lands situated in the same parallel with the most fertile and best cultivated provinces in Europe, are chilled with perpetual frosts, which almost destroy the power of vegetation [*d*]. As we advance to those parts

[*d*] See NOTE XXX.



of America which lie in the same parallel with provinces of Asia and Africa, blessed with an uniform enjoyment of such genial warmth as is most friendly to life and to vegetation, the dominion of cold continues to be felt, and winter reigns, though during a short period, with extreme severity. If we proceed along the American continent into the torrid zone, we shall find the cold prevalent in the New World extending itself also to this region of the globe, and mitigating the excess of its fervour. While the negro on the coast of Africa is scorched with unremitting heat, the inhabitants of Peru breathe an air equally mild and temperate, and is perpetually shaded under a canopy of grey clouds, which intercepts the fierce beams of the sun, without obstructing his friendly influence [e]. Along the eastern coast of America, the climate, though more similar to that of the torrid zone in other parts of the earth, is nevertheless considerably milder than in those countries of Asia and Africa which lie in the same latitude. If from the southern tropic we continue our progress to the extremity of the American continent, we meet with frozen seas, and countries horrid, barren, and scarcely habitable for cold, much sooner than in the north [f].

Various causes combine in rendering the climate of America so extremely different from that of the ancient continent. Though the utmost extent of America towards the north be not yet discovered, we know that it advances much nearer to the pole than either Europe or Asia. Both these have large seas to the north, which are open during part of the year; and even when covered with ice, the wind that blows over them is less intensely cold than that

[e] Voyage de Ulloa, tom. i. p. 453. Anson's Voyage, p. 184.

[f] Anson's Voyage, p. 74; and Voyage de Quiros, chez Hist. de Gen. des Voyages, tom. xiv. p. 83. Richard Hist. Natur. de l'Air, ii. 305, &c.

which blows over land in the same high latitudes. But in America the land stretches from the river St. Lawrence towards the pole, and spreads out immensely to the west. A chain of enormous mountains, covered with snow and ice, runs through all this dreary region. The wind, in passing over such an extent of high and frozen land, becomes so impregnated with cold, that it acquires a piercing keenness, which it retains in its progress through warmer climates, and is not entirely mitigated until it reach the Gulf of Mexico. Over all the continent of North America, a north-westerly wind and excessive cold are synonymous terms. Even in the most sultry weather, the moment that the wind veers to that quarter, its penetrating influence is felt in a transition from heat to cold, no less violent than sudden. To this powerful cause we may ascribe the extraordinary dominion of cold, and its violent inroads into the southern provinces in that part of the globe [g].

Other causes, no less remarkable, diminish the active power of heat in those parts of the American continent which lie between the tropics. In all that portion of the globe, the wind blows in an invariable direction from east to west. As this wind holds its course across the ancient continent, it arrives at the countries which stretch along the western shores of Africa, inflamed with all the fiery particles which it hath collected from the sultry plains of Asia, and the burning sands in the African desarts. The coast of Africa is, accordingly, the region of the earth which feels the most fervent heat, and is exposed to the unmitigated ardour of the torrid zone. But this same wind which brings such an excession of warmth to the countries lying between the river of Senegal and Cafraria, traverses the Atlantic Ocean, before it reaches the American shore. It is cooled in its passage

[g] Charlevoix Hist. de Nov. Fr. iii. 165. Hist. generale Voyages, tom. xv. 215, &c.

over this vast body of water, and is felt as a refreshing gale along the coast of Brasil [*h*], and Guiana, rendering these countries, though among the warmest in America, temperate, when compared with those which lie opposite to them in Africa [*i*]. As this wind advances in its course across America, it meets with immense plains, covered with impenetrable forests, or occupied by large rivers, marshes, and stagnating waters, where it can recover no considerable degree of heat. At length it arrives at the Andes, which run from north to south through the whole continent. In passing over their elevated and frozen summits, it is so thoroughly cooled, that the greater part of the countries beyond them hardly feel the ardour to which they seem exposed by their situation [*k*]. In the other provinces of America, from Tierra Fermè westward to the Mexican empire, the heat of the climate is tempered, in some places, by the elevation of the land above the sea, in others, by their extraordinary humidity, and in all, by the enormous mountains scattered over this tract. The islands of America in the torrid zone are either small or mountainous, and are fanned alternately by refreshing sea and land breezes.

The causes of the extraordinary cold towards the southern limits of America, and in the seas beyond it, cannot be ascertained in a manner equally satisfying. It was long supposed that a vast continent, distinguished by the name of *Terra Australis Incognita*, lay between the southern extremity of America and the Antarctic pole. The same principles which account for the extraordinary degree of cold in the northern regions of America, were employed in order to explain that which was felt at Cape Horn and

[*h*] See NOTE XXXI.

[*i*] See NOTE XXXII.

[*k*] Acosta Hist. Novi Orbis, lib. ii. c. 11. Buffon Hist. Naturelle, &c. tom. ii. 512, &c. ix. 107, &c. Osborn's Collect. of Voyages, ii. p. 868.

icent countries. The immense extent of the n continent, and the large rivers, which it into the ocean, were mentioned and admit- philosophers as causes sufficient to occasion usual sensation of cold, and the still more un- n appearances of frozen seas in that region of be. But the imaginary continent to which fluence was ascribed, having been searched ain, and the space which it was supposed to having been found to be an open sea, new ices must be formed with respect to the of a temperature of climate, so extremely dif- from that which we experience in countries d at the same distance from the opposite pole

: contemplating those permanent and charac- qualities of the American continent, which om the peculiarity of its situation, and the dis- of its parts, the next object that merits at- is its condition when first discovered, as far depended upon the industry and operations of The effects of human ingenuity and labour re extensive and considerable, than even our anity is apt at first to imagine. When we the face of the habitable globe, no small part fertility and beauty which we ascribe to the of nature, is the work of man. His efforts, ontinued through a succession of ages, change earance and improve the qualities of the earth. eat part of the ancient continent has long :cupied by nations far advanced in arts and y, our eye is accustomed to view the earth form which it assumes when rendered fit to residence of a numerous race of men, and to them with nourishment.

in the New World, the state of mankind was and the aspect of nature extremely different.

[1] See NOTE XXXIII.

Throughout all its vast regions, there were only two monarchies remarkable for extent of territory, or distinguished by any progress in improvement. The rest of this continent was possessed by small independent tribes, destitute of arts and industry, and neither capable to correct the defects, nor desirous to meliorate the condition of that part of the earth allotted to them for their habitation. Countries, occupied by such people, were almost in the same state as if they had been without inhabitants. Immense forests covered a great part of the uncultivated earth ; and as the hand of industry had not taught the rivers to run in a proper channel, or drained off the stagnating water, many of the most fertile plains were overflowed with inundations, or converted into marshes. In the southern provinces, where the warmth of the sun, the moisture of the climate, and the fertility of the soil, combine in calling forth the most vigorous powers of vegetation, the woods are so choked with its rank luxuriance, as to be almost impervious, and the surface of the ground is hid from the eye under a thick covering of shrubs, and herbs, and weeds. In this state of wild unassisted nature, a great part of the large provinces in South America, which extend from the bottom of the Andes to the sea, still remain. The European colonies have cleared and cultivated a few spots along the coast, but the original race of inhabitants, as rude and indolent as ever, have done nothing to open or improve a country, possessing almost every advantage of situation and climate. As we advance towards the northern provinces of America, nature continues to wear the same uncultivated aspect, and in proportion as the rigour of the climate increases, appears more desolate and horrid. There the forests, though not encumbered with the same exuberance of vegetation, are of immense extent ; prodigious marshes overspread the plains, and few marks appear of human activity in

any attempt to cultivate or embellish the earth. No wonder that the colonies sent from Europe were astonished at their first entrance into the New World. It appeared to them waste, solitary, and uninviting. When the English began to settle in America, they termed the countries of which they took possession, *The Wilderness*. Nothing but their eager expectation of finding mines of gold could have induced the Spaniards to penetrate through the woods and marshes of America, where, at every step, they observed the extreme difference between the uncultivated face of Nature, and that which it acquires under the forming hand of industry and art [m].

The labour and operations of man not only improve and embellish the earth, but render it more wholesome, and friendly to life. When any region lies neglected and destitute of cultivation, the air stagnates in the woods, putrid exhalations arise from the waters; the surface of the earth, loaded with rank vegetation, feels not the purifying influence of the sun or of the wind; the malignity of the distempers natural to the climate increases, and new maladies no less noxious are engendered. Accordingly, all the provinces of America, when first discovered, were found to be remarkably unhealthy. This the Spaniards experienced in every expedition into the New World, whether destined for conquest or settlement. Though by the natural constitution of their bodies, their habitual temperance, and the persevering vigour of their minds, they were as much formed as any people in Europe for active service in a sultry climate, they felt severely the fatal and pernicious qualities of those uncultivated regions through which they marched, or where they endeavoured to plant colonies. Great numbers were cut off by the unknown and violent diseases with which they were infected. Such as survived the destructive rage of

[m] See NOTE XXXIV.

those maladies, were not exempted from the noxious influence of the climate. They returned to Europe, according to the description of the early Spanish historians, feeble, emaciated, with languid looks, and complexions of such a sickly yellow colour, as indicated the unwholesome temperature of the countries where they had resided [*n*].

The uncultivated state of the New World affected not only the temperature of the air, but the qualities of its productions. The principle of life seems to have been less active and vigorous there, than in the ancient continent. Notwithstanding the vast extent of America, and the variety of its climates, the different species of animals peculiar to it are much fewer in proportion than those of the other hemisphere. In the islands, there were only four kinds of quadrupeds known, the largest of which did not exceed the size of a rabbit. On the continent, the variety was greater; and though the individuals of each kind could not fail of multiplying exceedingly, when almost unmolested by men, who were neither so numerous, nor so united in society, as to be formidable enemies to the animal creation, the number of distinct species must still be considered as extremely small. Of two hundred different kinds of animals spread over the face of the earth, only about one third existed in America, at the time of its discovery [*o*]. Nature was not only less prolific in the New World, but she appears likewise to have been less vigorous in her productions. The animals originally belong to this quarter of the globe appear to be of an inferior race, neither so robust, nor so fierce, as those of the other continent. America gives birth to no creature of such bulk as to be compared with the elephant or rhinoceros, or that equals the lion

[*n*] Gomara, Hist. c. 20, 22. Oviedo, Hist. lib. ii. c. 13. lib. v. c. 10. P. Mart. Epist. 545. Decad. p. 176.

[*o*] Buffon Hist. Naturelle, tom. ix. p. 86,

tyger in strength and ferocity [*p*]. The *Tapir* Brasil, the largest quadruped of the ravenous in the New World, is not larger than a calf of months old. The *Puma* and *Jaguar*, its fiercest of prey, which Europeans have inaccurately denominated lions and tygers, possess neither the united courage of the former, nor the ravenous ty of the latter [*q*]. They are inactive and, hardly formidable to man, and often turn their upon the least appearance of resistance [*r*]. The same qualities in the climate of America which checked the growth, and enfeebled the spirits of its animals, have proved pernicious to such as migrated into it voluntarily from the other continent, or have been transported thither by the Europeans [*s*]. The bears, the wolves, the deer of America, are not equal in size to those of the Old World [*t*]. Most of the domestic animals, with which the Europeans have stored the provinces in which they settled, have degenerated with respect to bulk or quality, in a country whose temperature and soil seem to be less favourable to the growth and perfection of the animal creation [*u*]. The same causes, which checked the growth and vigour of the more noble animals, were friendly to the propagation and increase of reptiles and insects. Though this is not peculiar to the New World, and the odious tribes, nourished by heat, moisture, corruption, infest every part of the torrid zone; multiply faster, perhaps, in America, and grow

[ See NOTE XXXV. [*q*] Buffon Hist. Natur. tom. 87. Margravii Hist. Nat. Brasil, p. 229. [*r*] Buffon Natur. ix. 13. 203. Acosta Hist. lib. iv. c. 34. Pisonis p. 6. Herrera, dec. 4. lib. iv. c. 1. lib. x. c. 13. [*s*] Hill, v. p. 691. Ovalle Relat. of Chili, Church. iii. p. 10. Ovario de Oviedo, c. 14—22. Voyage du Des Marchais, 1709. [*t*] Buffon Hist. Natur. ix. 103. Kalm's Travels, 1. Biet. Voy. de France Equinox. p. 339. [*u*] See NOTE XXXVI.



to a more monstrous bulk. As this country is, on the whole, less cultivated, and less peopled, than the other quarters of the earth, the active principle of life wastes its force in productions of this inferior form. The air is often darkened with clouds of insects, and the ground covered with shocking and noxious reptiles. The country around Porto-Bello swarms with toads in such multitudes, as hide the surface of the earth. At Guyaquil, snakes and vipers are hardly less numerous. Carthagena is infested with numerous flocks of bats, which annoy not only the cattle but the inhabitants [*x*]. In the islands, legions of ants have, at different times, consumed every vegetable production [*y*], and left the earth entirely bare, as if it had been burnt with fire. The damp forests, and rank soil of the countries on the banks of the Orinoco and Maragnon, teem with almost every offensive and poisonous creature, which the power of a sultry sun can quicken into life [*z*].

The birds of the New World are not distinguished by qualities so conspicuous and characteristical, as those which we have observed in its quadrupeds. Birds are more independent of man, and less affected by the changes which his industry and labour make upon the state of the earth. They have a greater propensity to migrate from one country to another, and can gratify this instinct of their nature without difficulty or danger. Hence the number of birds common to both continents is much greater than that of quadrupeds; and even such as are peculiar to America nearly resemble those with which mankind were acquainted in similar regions of the

[*x*] Voyage de Ulloa, tom. i. p. 89. Id. p. 147. Herrera, dec. 11. lib. iii. c. 3. 19. [*y*] See NOTE XXXVII. [*z*] Voyage de Condamine, p. 167. Gumilla, iii. 120, &c. Hist. Gener. des Voyages, xiv. 317. Dumont Memoires sur la Louisiane, i. 108. Sommaro de Oviedo, c. 52—62.

hemisphere. The American birds of the tor-  
 re, like those of the same climate in Asia and  
 , are decked in plumage, which dazzles the  
 ith the beauty of its colours; but Nature,  
 d with clothing them in this gay dress, has  
 most of them that melody of sound, and  
 of notes, which catch and delight the ear.  
 irds of the temperate climates there, in the  
 nanner as in our continent, are less splendid in  
 ppearance, but, in compensation for that de-  
 ey have voices of greater compass, and more  
 ous. In some districts of America, the un-  
 ome temperature of the air seems to be un-  
 able even to this part of the creation. The  
 r of birds is less than in other countries, and  
 iveller is struck with the amazing solitude  
 ence of its forests [a]. It is remarkable, how-  
 hat America, where the quadrupeds are so  
 sh and dastardly, should produce the *Condor*,  
 is entitled to pre-eminence over all the flying  
 n bulk, in strength, and in courage [b].

soil, in a continent so extensive as America,  
 of course, be extremely various. In each of  
 vinces, we find some distinguishing peculi-  
 the description of which belongs to those  
 rite their particular history. In general, we  
 observe, that the moisture and cold, which pre-  
 ates so remarkably in all parts of America,  
 ave great influence upon the nature of its soil;  
 ies lying in the same pallel with those re-  
 which never feel the extreme rigour of winter  
 ncient continent, are frozen over in America

bourgner Voy. au Perou, 17. Chanvalon Voyage à la  
 que, p. 96. Warren Descript. Surinam. Osborn's Col-  
 924. Lettres Edif. xxiv. p. 339. Charlev. Hist. de la  
 rance, iii. 155. [b] Voyage de Uïloa, i. 363. Voy-  
 ondamine, 175. Buffon Hist. Nat. xvi. 184. Voyage  
 Marchais, iii. 320.

during a great part of the year. Chilled by this intense cold, the ground never acquires warmth sufficient to ripen the fruits, which are found in the corresponding parts of the other continent. If we wish to rear in America the productions which abound in any particular district of the ancient world, we must advance several degrees nearer to the line than to the other hemisphere, as it requires such an increase of heat to counterbalance the natural frigidity of the soil and climate [c]. At the Cape of Good Hope, several of the plants, and fruits peculiar to the countries within the tropics, are cultivated with success; whereas, at St. Augustine, in Florida, and Charles-Town, in South Carolina, though considerably nearer the line, they cannot be brought to thrive with equal certainty [d]. But, if allowance be made for this diversity in the degree of heat, the soil of America is naturally as rich and fertile as in any part of the earth. As the country was thinly inhabited, and by a people of little industry, who had none of the domestic animals, which civilized nations rear in such vast numbers, the earth was not exhausted by their consumption. The vegetable productions, to which the fertility of the soil gave birth, often remained untouched, and being suffered to corrupt on its surface, returned with increase into its bosom [e]. As trees and plants derive a great part of their nourishment from air and water, if they were not destroyed by man and other animals, they would render to the earth more, perhaps, than they take from it, and feed rather than impoverish it. Thus the unoccupied soil of America may have gone on enriching for many ages. The vast number as well as enormous size of the trees in America, indicate the extraordinary vigour of the soil in its native state. When the Europeans first began to cultivate the New

[c] See NOTE XXXVIII.

[d] See NOTE XXXIX.

[e] Buffon Hist. Natur. i. 242. Kalm, i. 151.

World, they were astonished at the luxuriant power of vegetation in its virgin mould; and in several places the ingenuity of the planter is still employed in diminishing and wasting its superfluous fertility, in order to bring it down to a state fit for profitable culture [f].

Having thus surveyed the state of the New World at the time of its discovery, and considered the peculiar features and qualities which distinguish and characterise it, the next inquiry that merits attention is, How was America peopled? By what course did mankind migrate from the one continent to the other? and in what quarter is it most probable that a communication was opened between them?

We know with infallible certainty, that all the human race spring from the same source, and that the descendants of one man, under the protection, as well as in obedience to the command of Heaven, multiplied and replenished the earth. But neither the annals nor the traditions of nations reach back to those remote ages, in which they took possession of the different countries, where they are now settled. We cannot trace the branches of this first family, or point out with certainty the time and manner in which they divided and spread over the face of the globe. Even among the most enlightened people, the period of authentic history is extremely short, and every thing prior to that is fabulous or obscure. It is not surprising, then, that the unlettered inhabitants of America, who have no solicitude about futurity, and little curiosity concerning what is past, should be altogether unacquainted with their own original. The people on the two opposite coasts of America, who occupy those countries in America which approach nearest to the ancient continent, are

[f] Charlevoix, *Hist. de Nouv. Fran.* iii. 405. *Voyage du Des Marchais*, iii. 229. Lery ap de Bry, part iii. p. 174. See NOTE XL.

so remarkably rude, that it is altogether vain to search among them for such information as might discover the place from whence they came, or the ancestors of whom they are descended [g]. Whatever light has been thrown on this subject, is derived, not from the natives of America, but from the inquisitive genius of their conquerors.

When the people of Europe unexpectedly discovered a New World, removed at a vast distance from every part of the ancient continent which was then known, and filled with inhabitants whose appearance and manners differed remarkably from the rest of the human species, the question concerning their original became naturally an object of curiosity and attention. The theories and speculations of ingenious men with respect to this subject, would fill many volumes ; but are often so wild and chimerical, that I should offer an insult to the understanding of my readers, if I attempted either minutely to enumerate or to refute them. Some have presumptuously imagined, that the people of America were not the offspring of the same common parent with the rest of mankind, but that they formed a separate race of men, distinguishable by peculiar features in the constitution of their bodies, as well as in the characteristic qualities of their minds. Others contend, that they are descended from some remnant of the antediluvian inhabitants of the earth, who survived the deluge, which swept away the greatest part of the human species in the days of Noah ; and preposterously suppose rude, uncivilized tribes, scattered over an uncultivated continent, to be the most ancient race of people on the earth. There is hardly any nation from the north to the south pole, to which some antiquary, in the extravagance of conjecture, has not ascribed the honour of peopling America. The Jews, the Canaanites, the Phœnicians,

[g] Venega's Hist. of California, i. 60.

the Carthaginians, the Greeks, the Scythians, in ancient times, are supposed to have settled in this western world. The Chinese, the Swedes, the Norwegians, the Welsh, the Spaniards, are said to have sent colonies thither in latter ages, at different periods, and on various occasions. Zealous advocates stand forth to support the respective claims of those people ; and though they rest upon no better foundation than the casual resemblance of some customs, or the supposed affinity between a few words in their different languages, much erudition and more zeal have been employed, to little purpose, in defence of the opposite systems. Those regions of conjecture and controversy belong not to the historian. His is a more limited province, confined to what is established by certain or highly probable evidence. Beyond this I shall not venture, in offering a few observations, which may contribute to throw some light upon this curious and much agitated question.

1. There are authors who have endeavoured by mere conjectures to account for the peopling of America. Some have supposed that it was originally united to the ancient continent, and disjoined from it by the shock of an earthquake, or the irruption of a deluge. Others have imagined, that some vessel being forced from its course by the violence of a westerly wind, might be driven by accident towards the American coast, and have given a beginning to population in that desolate continent [*h*]. But with respect to all those systems, it is vain either to reason or inquire, because it is impossible to come to any decision. Such events as they suppose are barely possible, and may have happened. That they ever did happen, we have no evidence, either from the

[*h*] Parson's remains of Japhet, p. 240. Ancient Univers. Hist. vol. xx. p. 164. P. Feyjoo Teatro Critico, tom. v. p. 304, &c. Acosta Hist. Moral. Novi Orbis, lib. i. c. 16. 19.

clear testimony of history, or from the obscure intimations of tradition.

2. Nothing can be more frivolous or uncertain than the attempts to discover the original of the Americans, merely by tracing the resemblance between their manners and those of any particular people in the ancient continent. If we suppose two tribes, though placed in the most remote regions of the globe, to live in a climate nearly of the same temperature, to be in the same state of society, and to resemble each other in the degree of their improvement, they must feel the same wants, and exert the same endeavours to supply them. The same objects will allure, the same passions will animate them, and the same ideas and sentiments will arise in their minds. The character and occupations of the hunter in America must be little different from those of an Asiatic, who depends for subsistence on the chase. A tribe of savages on the banks of the Danube must nearly resemble one upon the plains washed by the Mississippi. Instead then of presuming from this similarity, that there is any affinity between them, we should only conclude, that the disposition and manners of men are formed by their situation, and arise from the state of society in which they live. The moment that begins to vary, the character of a people must change. In proportion as it advances in improvement, their manners refine, their powers and talents are called forth. In every part of the earth the progress of man hath been nearly the same, and we can trace him in his career from the rude simplicity of savage life, until he attains the industry, the arts, and the elegance of polished society. There is nothing wonderful then in the similitude between the Americans and the barbarous nations of our continent. Had Lafitau, Garcia, and many other authors, attended to this, they would not have perplexed a subject which they pretend to illustrate, by

their fruitless endeavours to establish an affinity between various races of people in the old and new continents, upon no other evidence than such a resemblance in their manners as necessarily arises from the similarity of their condition. There are, it is true, among every people, some customs, which, as they do not flow from any natural want or desire peculiar to their situation, may be denominated usages of arbitrary institution. If between two nations settled in remote parts of the earth, a perfect agreement with respect to any of these should be discovered, one might be led to suspect that they were connected by some affinity. If, for example, a nation were found in America that consecrated the seventh day to religious worship and rest, we might justly suppose that it had derived its knowledge of this usage, which is of arbitrary institution, from the Jews. But, if it were discovered that another nation celebrated the first appearance of every new moon with extraordinary demonstrations of joy, we should not be entitled to conclude that the observation of this monthly festival was borrowed from the Jews, but ought to consider it merely as the expression of that joy which is natural to man on the return of the planet which guides and cheers him in the night. The instances of customs, merely arbitrary, common to the inhabitants of both hemispheres, are, indeed, so few and so equivocal, that no theory concerning the population of the New World ought to be founded upon them.

3. The theories which have been formed with respect to the original of the Americans, from observation of their religious rites and practices, are no less fanciful, and destitute of solid foundation. When the religious opinions of any people are neither the result of rational inquiry, nor derived from the instructions of revelation, they must needs be wild and extravagant. Barbarous nations are incapable of the



former, and have not been blessed with the advantages arising from the latter. Still, however, the human mind, even where its operations appear most wild and capricious, holds a course so regular, that in every age and country the dominion of particular passions will be attended with similar effects. The savage of Europe or America, when filled with superstitious dread of invisible beings, or with inquisitive solicitude to penetrate into the events of futurity, trembles alike with fear, or glows with impatience. He has recourse to rites and practices of the same kind, in order to avert the vengeance which he supposes to be impending over him, or to divine the secret which is the object of his curiosity. Accordingly, the ritual of superstition, in one continent, seems, in many particulars, to be a transcript of that established in the other, and both authorise similar institutions, sometimes so frivolous as to excite pity, sometimes so bloody and barbarous as to create horror. But without supposing any consanguinity between such distant nations, or imagining that their religious ceremonies were conveyed by tradition from the one to the other, we may ascribe this uniformity, which in many instances seems very amazing, to the natural operation of superstition and enthusiasm upon the weakness of the human mind.

4. We may lay it down as a certain principle in this inquiry, that America was not peopled by any nation of the ancient continent, which had made considerable progress in civilization. The inhabitants of the New World were in a state of society so extremely rude, as to be unacquainted with those arts which are the first essays of human ingenuity in its advance towards improvement. Even the most cultivated nations of America were strangers to many of those simple inventions, which were almost coëval with society in other parts of the world, and were known in the earliest periods of civil life with which

we have any acquaintance. From this it is manifest, that the tribes which originally migrated to America, came off from nations which must have been no less barbarous than their posterity, at the time when they were first discovered by the Europeans. For, although the elegant and refined arts may decline or perish, amidst the violent shocks of those revolutions and disasters to which nations are exposed, the necessary arts of life, when once they have been introduced among any people, are never lost. None of the vicissitudes in human affairs affect these, and they continue to be practised as long as the race of men exists. If ever the use of iron had been known to the savages of America, or to their progenitors, if ever they had employed a plough, a loom, or a forge, the utility of those inventions would have preserved them, and it is impossible that they should have been abandoned or forgotten. We may conclude then, that the Americans sprung from some people, who were themselves in such an early and unimproved stage of society, as to be unacquainted with all those necessary arts, which continued to be unknown among their posterity, when first visited by the Spaniards.

5. It appears no less evident that America was not peopled by any colony from the more southern nations of the ancient continent. None of the rude tribes settled in that part of our hemisphere can be supposed to have visited a country so remote. They possessed neither enterprise, nor ingenuity, nor power, that could prompt them to undertake, or enable them to perform, such a distant voyage. That the more civilized nations in Asia or Africa are not the progenitors of the Americans is manifest, not only from the observations which I have already made concerning their ignorance of the most simple and necessary arts, but from an additional circumstance. Whenever any people have experienced the

advantages which men enjoy, by their dominion over the inferior animals, they can neither subsist without the nourishment which these afford, nor carry on any considerable operation independent of their ministry and labour. Accordingly, the first care of the Spaniards, when they settled in America, was to stock it with all the domestic animals of Europe; and if, prior to them, the Tyrians, the Carthaginians, the Chinese, or any other polished people, had taken possession of that continent, we should have found there the animals peculiar to those regions of the globe where they were originally seated. In all America, however, there is not one animal, tame or wild, which properly belongs to the warm, or even the more temperate countries of the ancient continent. The camel, the dromedary, the horse, the cow, were as much unknown in America, as the elephant or the lion. From which it is obvious, that the people who first settled in the western world did not issue from the countries where those animals abound, and where men, from having been long accustomed to their aid, would naturally consider it, not only as beneficial, but as indispensibly necessary to the improvement, and even the preservation, of civil society.

6. From considering the animals with which America is stored, we may conclude that the nearest point of contact between the old and new continents is towards the northern extremity of both, and that there the communication was opened, and the intercourse carried on between them. All the extensive countries in America which lie within the tropics, or approach near to them, are filled with indigenous animals of various kinds, entirely different from those in the corresponding regions of the ancient continent. But the northern provinces of the New World abound with many of the wild animals which are common in such parts of our hemisphere as lie

in a similar situation. The bear, the wolf, the fox, the hare, the deer, roebuck, the elk, and several other species frequent the forests of North America, no less than those in the North of Europe and Asia [h]. It seems to be evident then, that the two continents approach each other in this quarter, and are either united, or so nearly adjacent, that these animals might pass from the one to the other.

7. The actual vicinity of the two continents is so nearly established by modern discoveries, that the chief difficulty with respect to the peopling of America is removed. While those immense regions, which stretch eastward from the river Oby to the sea of Kamschatka were unknown, or imperfectly explored, the north-east extremities of our hemisphere were supposed to be so far distant from any part of the New World, that it was not easy to conceive how any communication should have been carried on between them. But the Russians, having subjected the western part of Siberia to their empire, gradually extended their knowledge of that vast country, by advancing towards the east into unknown provinces. These were discovered by hunters in their excursions after game, or by soldiers employed in levying the taxes, and the court of Moscow estimated the importance of those countries only by the small addition which they made to its revenue. At length Peter the Great ascended the Russian throne. His enlightened, comprehensive mind, intent upon every circumstance that could aggrandize his empire, or render his reign illustrious, discerned the consequences of those discoveries, which had escaped the observation of his ignorant predecessors. He perceived, that in proportion as the regions of Asia extended towards the east, they must approach nearer to America; that the communication between the two continents, which had long been searched for

[h] Buffon Hist. Nat. ix. p. 97, &c.

tain, would probably be found in this quarter, and that by opening it, some part of the wealth and commerce of the western world might be made to flow into his dominions by a new channel. Such an object suited a genius that delighted in grand schemes. Peter drew up instructions with his own hand for prosecuting this design, and gave orders for carrying it into execution [i].

His successors adopted his ideas, and pursued his plan. The officers whom the Russian court employed in this service, had to struggle with so many difficulties, that their progress was extremely slow. Encouraged by some faint traditions among the people of Siberia, concerning a successful voyage in the year one thousand six hundred and forty-eight round the north-east promontory of Asia, they attempted to follow the same course. Vessels were fitted out, with this view, at different times, from the rivers Lena and Kolyma; but in a frozen ocean, which nature seems not to have destined for navigation, they were exposed to many disasters, without being able to accomplish their purpose. No vessel fitted out by the Russian court ever doubled the formidable cape [k]; we are indebted for our knowledge of those extreme regions of Asia, to the coveries made in excursions by land. In all the provinces an opinion prevails, that there are tries of great extent and fertility, which are at a considerable distance from their own coasts. The Russians imagined to be part of America, several circumstances concurred not only in confirming them in this belief, but in persuading some portion of that continent could not be so desolate. Trees of various kinds, unknown in the naked regions of Asia, are driven upon an easterly wind. By the same wind

[i] Muller Voyages et Decouvertes par les Russes, 4, 5. 141.  
[k] See

s brought thither in a few days ; flights of birds arrive annually from the same quarter, and a tradition obtains among the inhabitants, of an intercourse formerly carried on with some countries situated to the east.

After weighing all these particulars, and comparing the position of the countries in Asia which had been discovered, with such parts in the north-west of America as were already known, the Russian court formed a plan, which would have hardly occurred to a nation less accustomed to engage in arduous undertakings, and to contend with great difficulties. Orders were issued to build two vessels at the small village of Ochotz, situated on the sea of Kamschatka, to sail on a voyage of discovery. Though that dreary uncultivated region furnished nothing that could be of use in constructing them, but some larch trees ; though not only the iron, the cordage, the sails, and all the numerous articles requisite for their equipment, but the provisions for victualling them were to be carried through the immense deserts of Siberia, down rivers of difficult navigation, and along roads almost impassable, the mandate of the sovereign, and the perseverance of the people, at last surmounted every obstacle. Two vessels were finished, and, under the command of the captains Behring and Tschirikow, sailed from Kamschatka [June 4, 1741], in quest of the New World, in a quarter where it had never been approached. They shaped their course towards the east ; and though a storm soon separated the vessels, which never re-joined, and many disasters befel them, the expectations from the voyage were not altogether frustrated. Each of the commanders discovered land, which to them appeared to be part of the American continent ; and, according to their observations, it seems to be situated within a few degrees of the north-west coast of California. Each set some of his people

ashore; but in one place the inhabitants fled as the Russians approached; in another, they carried off those who landed, and destroyed their boats. The violence of the weather, and the distress of their crews, obliged both captains to quit this inhospitable coast. In their return they touched at several islands, which stretch in a chain from east to west between the countries which they had discovered and the coast of Asia. They had some intercourse with the natives, who seemed to them to resemble the North Americans. They presented to the Russians the *calumet*, or pipe of peace, which is a symbol of friendship universal among the people of North America, and an usage of arbitrary institution, peculiar to them.

Though the islands of this New Archipelago have been frequented since that time by the Russian hunters, the court of St. Petersburg, during a period of more than forty years, seems to have relinquished every thought of prosecuting discoveries in that quarter. But in the year one thousand seven hundred and sixty-eight, it was unexpectedly resumed. The sovereign who had been lately seated on the throne of Peter the Great, possessed the genius and talents of her illustrious predecessor. During the operations of the most arduous and extensive war in which the Russian empire was ever engaged, she formed schemes and executed undertakings, to which more limited abilities would have been incapable of attending but amidst the leisure of pacific times. A new voyage of discovery from the eastern extremity of Asia was planned, and captain Krenitzin and lieutenant Levashoff were appointed to command the two vessels fitted out for that purpose. In their voyage outward they held nearly the same course with the former navigators, they touched at the same islands, observed their situation and productions more carefully, and discovered several new islands, with which Behring and Tschirikow

had not fallen in. Though they did not proceed so far to the east as to revisit the country which Behring and Tschirikow supposed to be part of the American continent, yet, by returning in a course considerably to the north of theirs, they corrected some capital mistakes into which their predecessors had fallen, and have contributed to facilitate the progress of future navigators in those seas [1].

Thus the possibility of a communication between the continents in this quarter rests no longer upon mere conjecture, but is established by undoubted evidence [m]. Some tribe, or some families of wandering Tartars, from the restless spirit peculiar to their race, might migrate to the nearest islands, and, rude as their knowledge of navigation was, might, by passing from one to the other, reach at length the coast of America, and give a beginning to population in that continent. The distance between the Marian or Ladrone islands and the nearest land in Asia, is greater than that between the part of America which the Russians discovered, and the coast of Kamschatka; and yet the inhabitants of those islands are manifestly of Asiatic extract. If notwithstanding their remote situation, we admit that the Marian islands were peopled from our continent, distance alone is no reason why we should hesitate about admitting that the Americans may derive their original from the same source. It is probable that future navigators, in those seas, by steering farther to the north, may find that the continent of America approaches still nearer to Asia. According to the information of the barbarous people who inhabit the country about the north-east promontory of Asia, there lies, off the coast, a small island, to which they sail in less than a day. From that they can descry a large continent, which, accord-

[1] See NOTE XLII.

[m] Muller's Voyages, tom. i. p. 248, &c. 267, 275.



ing to their description, is covered with forests, and possessed by people whose language they do not understand [*n*]. By them they are supplied with the skins of martens, an animal unknown in the northern parts of Siberia, and which is never found but in countries abounding with trees. If we could rely on this account, we might conclude, that the American continent is separated from ours only by a narrow strait, and all the difficulties with respect to the communication between them would vanish. What could be offered only as a conjecture when this History was first published is now known to be certain. The near approach of the two continents to each other has been discovered and traced in a voyage undertaken upon principles so pure and so liberal, and conducted with so much professional skill, as reflect lustre upon the reign of the sovereign by whom it was planned, and do honour to the officers entrusted with the execution of it [*o*].

It is likewise evident from recent discoveries, that an intercourse between our continent and America might be carried on with no less facility from the north-west extremities of Europe. As early as the ninth century [*A. D.* 830], the Norwegians discovered Greenland, and planted colonies there. The communication with that country, after a long interruption, was renewed in the last century. Some Lutheran and Moravian missionaries, prompted by zeal for propagating the Christian faith, have ventured to settle in this frozen and uncultivated region [*p*]. To them we are indebted for much curious information with respect to its nature and inhabitants. We learn, that the north-west coast of Greenland is separated from America by a very nar-

[*n*] Muller's *Voyages & Decouv.* i. 166.

[*o*] See NOTE XLIII.

[*p*] Crantz' *Hist. of Greenl.* i. 242, 244. Prevot *Hist. G<sup>en</sup>des Voyages*, tom. xv. 152, not. (96).

row strait; that, at the bottom of the bay into which this strait conducts, it is highly probable that they are united [*q*]; that the inhabitants of the two countries have some intercourse with one another; that the Esquimaux of America perfectly resemble the Greenlanders in their aspect, dress, and mode of living; that some sailors, who had acquired the knowledge of a few words in the Greenlandish language, reported that these were understood by the Esquimaux; that, at length [*A. D.* 1764], a Moravian missionary, well acquainted with the language of Greenland, having visited the country of the Esquimaux, found, to his astonishment, that they spoke the same language with the Greenlanders, that they were in every respect the same people, and he was accordingly received and entertained by them as a friend and a brother [*r*].

By these decisive facts, not only the consanguinity of the Esquimaux and Greenlanders is established, but the possibility of peopling America from the north of Europe is demonstrated. If the Norwegians, in a barbarous age, when science had not begun to dawn in the north of Europe, possessed such a naval skill as to open a communication with Greenland, their ancestors as much addicted to roving by sea, as the Tartars are to wandering by land, might, at some more remote period, accomplish the same voyage, and settle a colony there, whose descendants might, in progress of time, migrate into America. But, if, instead of venturing to sail directly from their own coast to Greenland, we suppose that the Norwegians held a more cautious course, and advanced from Shetland to the Feroc Islands, and from them to Iceland, in all which they had planted colonies, their progress may have been so gradual, that this navigation cannot be considered as either long or

[*q*] Eggedø, p. 2, 3.

[*r*] Crantz' Hist. of Greenl. p. 261, 262.

more hazardous, than those voyages which that hardy and enterprising race of men is known to have performed in every age.

8. Though it be possible that America may have received its first inhabitants from our continent, either by the north-west of Europe or the north-east of Asia, there seems to be good reason for supposing that the progenitors of all the American nations, from Cape Horn to the southern confines of Labrador, migrated from the latter rather than the former. The Esquimaux are the only people of America, who, in their aspect or character, bear any resemblance to the northern Europeans. They are manifestly a race of men, distinct from all the nations of the American continent, in language, in disposition, and in habits of life. Their original, then, may warrantably be traced up to that source, which I have pointed out. But, among all the other inhabitants of America, there is such a striking similitude in the form of their bodies, and the qualities of their minds, that, notwithstanding the diversities occasioned by the influence of climate, or unequal progress in improvement, we must pronounce them to be descended from one source. There may be a variety in the shades, but we can every where trace the same original colour. Each tribe has something peculiar which distinguishes it, but in all of them we discern certain features common to the whole race. It is remarkable, that in every peculiarity, whether in their persons or dispositions, which characterise the Americans, they have some resemblance to the rude tribes scattered over the north-east of Asia, but almost none to the nations settled in the northern extremities of Europe. We may, therefore, refer them to the former origin, and conclude that their Asiatic progenitors, having settled in those parts of America, where the Russians have discovered the proximity of the two continents, spread gradually

over its various regions. This account of the progress of population in America coincides with the traditions of the Mexicans concerning their own origin, which, imperfect as they are, were preserved with more accuracy, and merit greater credit, than those of any people in the New World. According to them, their ancestors came from a remote country, situated to the north-west of Mexico. The Mexicans point out their various stations as they advanced from this, into the interior provinces, and it is precisely the same route which they must have held, if they had been emigrants from Asia. The Mexicans, in describing the appearance of their progenitors, their manners and habits of life at that period, exactly delineate those of the rude Tartars, from whom I suppose them to have sprung [r].

Thus have I finished a disquisition which has been deemed of so much importance, that it would have been improper to omit it in writing the history of America. I have ventured to inquire, but without presuming to decide. Satisfied with offering conjectures, I pretend not to establish any system. When an investigation is, from its nature, so intricate and obscure, that it is impossible to arrive at conclusions which are certain, there may be some merit in pointing out such as are probable [s].

The condition and character of the American nations, at the time when they became known to the Europeans, deserve more attentive consideration, than the inquiry concerning their original. The latter is merely an object of curiosity, the former is one of the most important as well as instructive researches which can occupy the philosopher or historian. In

[r] Acosta Hist. Nat. & Mor. lib. vii. c. 2, &c. Garcia Origen de los Indios, lib. v. c. 3. Torquemada Monar. Ind. lib. i. c. 2, &c. Boturini Benaduci Idea de una Hist. de la Amer. Septentr. § xvii. p. 127. [s] Memoires sur la Louisiane, par Dumont, tom. i. p. 119.

order to complete the history of the human mind, and attain to a perfect knowledge of its nature and operations, we must contemplate man in all those various situations wherein he has been placed. We must follow him in his progress through the different stages of society, as he gradually advances from the infant state of civil life toward its maturity and decline. We must observe, at each period, how the faculties of his understanding unfold; we must attend to the efforts of his active powers, watch the various movements of desire and affection, as they rise in his breast, and mark whither they tend, and with what ardour they are exerted. The philosophers and historians of ancient Greece and Rome, our guides in this as well as every other disquisition, had only a limited view of this subject, as they had hardly any opportunity of surveying man in his rudest and most early state. In all those regions of the earth with which they were well acquainted, civil society had made considerable advances, and nations had finished a good part of their career before they began to observe them. The Scythians and Germans, the rudest people of whom any ancient author has transmitted to us an authentic account, possessed flocks and herds, had acquired property of various kinds, and, when compared with mankind in their primitive state, may be reckoned to have attained to a great degree of civilization.

But the discovery of the New World enlarged the sphere of contemplation, and presented nations to our view, in stages of their progress, much less advanced than those wherein they have been observed in our continent. In America, man appears under the rudest form in which we can conceive him to subsist. We behold communities just beginning to unite, and may examine the sentiments and actions of human beings in the infancy of social life, while they feel but imperfectly the force of its ties, and have

cely relinquished their native liberty. That state of primitive simplicity, which was known in our continent only by the fanciful description of poets, never existed in the other. The greater part of its inhabitants were strangers to industry and labour, ignorant arts, imperfectly acquainted with the nature of property, and enjoying almost without restriction or trouble the blessings which flowed spontaneously from the bounty of nature. There were only two nations in this vast continent which had emerged from this rude state, and had made any considerable progress in acquiring the ideas, and adopting the institutions, which belong to polished societies. Their government and manners will fall naturally under review in relating the discovery and conquest of Mexican and Peruvian empires; and we shall have there an opportunity of contemplating the Americans in the state of highest improvement to which they ever attained.

At present, our attention and researches shall be directed to the small independent tribes which occupy every other part of America. Among these, though with some diversity in their character, their manners, and institutions, the state of society was generally similar, and so extremely rude, that the designation of *Savage* may be applied to them all. In the general history of America, it would be highly improper to describe the condition of each petty community, or to investigate every minute circumstance which contributes to form the character of its members. Such an inquiry would lead to details of immeasurable and tiresome extent. The qualities belonging to the people of all the different tribes have a near resemblance, that they may be painted with the same features. Where any circumstances tend to constitute a diversity in their character and manners worthy of attention, it will be sufficient to

point these out as they occur, and to inquire into the cause of such peculiarities.

It is extremely difficult to procure satisfying and authentic information concerning nations while they remain uncivilized. To discover their true character under this rude form, and to select the features by which they are distinguished, requires an observer possessed of no less impartiality than discernment. For, in every stage of society, the faculties, the sentiments and desires of men are so accommodated to their own state, that they become standards of excellence to themselves, they affix the idea of perfection and happiness to those attainments which resemble their own, and wherever the objects and enjoyments to which they have been accustomed are wanting, confidently pronounce a people to be barbarous and miserable. Hence the mutual contempt with which the members of communities, unequal in their degrees of improvement, regard each other. Polished nations, conscious of the advantages which they derive from their knowledge and arts, are apt to view rude nations with peculiar scorn, and, in the pride of superiority, will hardly allow either their occupations, their feelings, or their pleasures, to be worthy of men. It has seldom been the lot of communities, in their early and unpolished state, to fall under the observation of persons endowed with force of mind superior to vulgar prejudices, and capable of contemplating man, under whatever aspect he appears, with a candid and discerning eye.

The Spaniards, who first visited America, and who had opportunity of beholding its various tribes while entire and unsubdued, and before any change had been made in their ideas or manners by intercourse with a race of men much advanced beyond them in improvement, were far from possessing the qualities requisite for observing the striking spectacle presented to their view. Neither the age in which they

lived, nor the nation to which they belonged, had made such progress in true science, as inspires enlarged and liberal sentiments. The conquerors of the New World were mostly illiterate adventurers, destitute of all the ideas which should have directed them in contemplating objects, so extremely different from those with which they were acquainted. Surrounded continually with danger, or struggling with hardships, they had little leisure, and less capacity, for any speculative inquiry. Eager to take possession of a country of such extent and opulence, and happy in finding it occupied by inhabitants so incapable to defend it, they hastily pronounced them to be a wretched order of men, formed merely for servitude; and were more employed in computing the profits of their labour, than in enquiring into the operations of their minds, or the reasons of their customs and institutions. The persons who penetrated at subsequent periods into the interior provinces, to which the knowledge and devastations of the first conquerors did not reach, were generally of a similar character; brave and enterprising in an high degree, but so uninformed as to be little qualified either for observing or describing what they beheld.

Not only the incapacity, but the prejudices of the Spaniards, render their accounts of the people of America extremely defective. Soon after they planted colonies in their new conquests, a difference in opinion arose with respect to the treatment of the natives. One party, solicitous to render their servitude perpetual, represented them as a brutish, obstinate race, incapable either of acquiring religious knowledge, or of being trained to the functions of social life. The other, full of pious concern for their conversion, contended that, though rude and ignorant, they were gentle, affectionate, docile, and by proper instructions and regulations might be formed gradually into good Christians and useful citizens.



This controversy, as I have already related, was carried on with all the warmth which is natural, when attention to interest on the one hand, and religious zeal on the other, animate the disputants. Most of the laity espoused the former opinion; all the ecclesiastics were advocates for the latter; and we shall uniformly find that, accordingly as an author belonged to either of these parties, he is apt to magnify the virtues or aggravate the defects of the Americans far beyond truth. Those repugnant accounts increase the difficulty of attaining a perfect knowledge of their character, and render it necessary to peruse all the descriptions of them by Spanish writers with distrust, and to receive their information with some grains of allowance.

Almost two centuries elapsed after the discovery of America, before the manners of its inhabitants attracted, in any considerable degree, the attention of philosophers. At length, they discovered that the contemplation of the condition and character of the Americans in their original state, tended to complete our knowledge of the human species, might enable us to fill up a considerable chasm in the history of its progress, and lead to speculations no less curious than important. They entered upon this new field of study with great ardour; but instead of throwing light upon the subject, they have contributed, in some degree, to involve it in additional obscurity. Too impatient to enquire, they hastened to decide; and began to erect systems, when they should have been searching for facts on which to establish their foundations. Struck with the appearance of degeneracy in the human species throughout the New World, and astonished at beholding a vast continent occupied by a naked, feeble and ignorant race of men, some authors of great name have maintained, that this part of the globe had but lately emerged from the sea, and become fit for the residence of man;

that every thing in it bore marks of a recent original ; and that its inhabitants, lately called into existence, and still at the beginning of their career, were unworthy to be compared with the people of a more ancient and improved continent [*l*]. Others have imagined, that, under the influence of an unkindly climate, which checks and enervates the principle of life, man never attained in America the perfection which belongs to his nature, but remained an animal of an inferior order, defective in the vigour of his bodily frame, and destitute of sensibility, as well as of force, in the operations of his mind [*u*]. In opposition to both these, other philosophers have supposed that man arrives at his highest dignity and excellence long before he reaches a state of refinement ; and, in the rude simplicity of savage life, displays an elevation of sentiment, and independence of mind, and a warmth of attachment, for which it is vain to search among the members of polished societies [*x*]. They seem to consider that as the most perfect state of man which is the least civilized. They describe the manners of the rude Americans with such rapture, as if they proposed them for models to the rest of the species. These contradictory theories have been proposed with equal confidence, and uncommon powers of genius and eloquence have been exerted, in order to clothe them with an appearance of truth.

As all those circumstances concur in rendering an inquiry into the state of the rude nations in America intricate and obscure, it is necessary to carry it on with caution. When guided in our researches by the intelligent observations of the few philosophers who have visited this part of the globe, we may venture to decide. When obliged to have recourse

[*l*] M. de Buffon Hist. Nat. iii. 484, &c. ix. 103, 114.

[*u*] M. de P. Recherches Philosoph. sur les Americ. passim.

[*x*] M. Rousseau.

to the superficial remarks of vulgar travellers, of sailors, traders, buccaneers, and missionaries, we must often pause, and, comparing detached facts, endeavour to discover what they wanted sagacity to observe. Without indulging conjecture, or betraying a propensity to either system, we must study with equal care to avoid the extremes of extravagant admiration, or of supercilious contempt for those manners which we describe.

In order to conduct this inquiry with greater accuracy, it should be rendered as simple as possible. Man existed as an individual before he became the member of a community; and the qualities which belong to him under his former capacity should be known, before we proceed to examine those which arise from the latter relation. This is peculiarly necessary in investigating the manners of rude nations. Their political union is so incomplete, their civil institutions and regulations so few, so simple, and of such slender authority, that men in this state ought to be viewed rather as independent agents, than as members of a regular society. The character of a savage results almost entirely from his sentiments or feelings as an individual, and is but little influenced by his imperfect subjection to government and order. I shall conduct my researches concerning the manners of the Americans in this natural order, proceeding gradually from what is simple to what is more complicated.

I shall consider, I. The bodily constitution of the Americans in those regions now under review. II. The qualities of their minds. III. Their domestic state. IV. Their political state and institutions. V. Their system of war, and public security. VI. The arts with which they were acquainted. VII. Their religious ideas and institutions. VIII. Such singular detached customs as are not reducible to any of the

former heads. IX. I shall conclude with a general review and estimate of their virtues and defects.

I. The bodily constitution of the Americans.—The human body is less affected by climate than that of any other animal. Some animals are confined to a particular region of the globe, and cannot exist beyond it; others, though they may be brought to bear the injuries of a climate foreign to them, cease to multiply when carried out of that district which Nature destined to be their mansion. Even such as seem capable of being naturalized in various climates, feel the effect of every remove from their proper station, and gradually dwindle and degenerate from the vigour and perfection peculiar to their species. Man is the only living creature whose frame is at once so hardy and so flexible, that he can spread over the whole earth, become the inhabitant of every region, and thrive and multiply under every climate. Subject, however, to the general law of nature, the human body is not entirely exempt from the operation of climate; and when exposed to the extremes either of heat or cold, its size or vigour diminishes.

The first appearance of the inhabitants of the New World, filled the discoverers with such astonishment, that they were apt to imagine them a race of men different from those of the other hemisphere. Their complexion is of a reddish brown, nearly resembling the colour of copper [y]. The hair of their heads is always black, long, coarse and uncurled. They have no beard, and every part of their body is perfectly smooth. Their persons are of a full size, extremely straight and well proportioned [z]. Their features are regular, though often distorted by absurd endeavours to improve the beauty of their natural form, or to render their aspect more dreadful to their enemies. In the islands, where four-footed animals

[y] Oviedo Somario, p. 46, D. Life of Columbus, c. 24.

[z] See NOTE XLIV.

were both few and small, and the earth yielded her productions almost spontaneously, the constitution of the natives, neither braced by the active exercises of the chase, nor invigorated by the labour of cultivation, was extremely feeble and languid. On the continent, where the forests abound with game of various kinds, and the chief occupation of many tribes was to pursue it, the human frame acquired greater firmness. Still, however, the Americans were more remarkable for agility than strength. They resembled beasts of prey, rather than animals formed for labour [*a*]. They were not only averse to toil, but incapable of it; and when roused by force from their native indolence, and compelled to work, they sunk under tasks which the people of the other continent would have performed with ease [*b*]. This feebleness of constitution was universal among the inhabitants of those regions in America which we are surveying, and may be considered as characteristic of the species there [*c*].

The beardless countenance and smooth skin of the American seems to indicate a defect of vigour, occasioned by some vice in his frame. He is destitute of one sign of manhood and of strength. This peculiarity, by which the inhabitants of the New World are distinguished from the people of all other nations, cannot be attributed, as some travellers have supposed, to their mode of subsistence [*d*]. For though the food of many Americans be extremely insipid, as they are altogether unacquainted with the use of salt, rude tribes in other parts of the earth have subsisted on aliments equally simple, without

[*a*] See NOTE XLV. [*b*] Oviedo Som. p. 51, C. Voy. de Coreal, ii. 138. Wafer's Description, p. 131. [*c*] B. Las Casas Brev. Relac. p. 4. Torquem. Monar. i. 580. Oviedo Somario, p. 41. Histor. lib. iii. c. 6. Herrera, dec. i. lib. ix. c. 5. Simon, p. 41. [*d*] Charlev. Hist. de Nouv. Fr. iii. 310.

this mark of degradation, or any apparent symptom of a diminution in their vigour.

As the external form of the Americans leads us to suspect that there is some natural debility in their frame, the smallness of their appetite for food has been mentioned by many authors as a confirmation of this suspicion. The quantity of food which men consume varies according to the temperature of the climate in which they live, the degree of activity which they exert, and the natural vigour of their constitutions. Under the enervating heat of the torrid zone, and when men pass their days in indolence and ease, they require less nourishment than the active inhabitants of temperate or cold countries. But neither the warmth of their climate, nor their extreme laziness, will account for the uncommon defect of appetite among the Americans. The Spaniards were astonished with observing this, not only in the islands, but in several parts of the continent. The constitutional temperance of the natives far exceeded, in their opinion, the abstinence of the most mortified hermits [*e*]; while, on the other hand, the appetite of the Spaniards appeared to the Americans insatiably voracious; and they affirmed, that one Spaniard devoured more food in a day than was sufficient for ten Americans [*f*].

A proof of some feebleness in their frame, still more striking, is the insensibility of the Americans to the charms of beauty, and the power of love. That passion which was destined to perpetuate life, to be the bond of social union, and the source of tenderness and joy, is the most ardent in the human breast. Though the pearls and hardships of the savage state, though excessive fatigue, on some occasions, and the difficulty at all times of procuring subsistence, may

[*e*] Ramusio, iii. 304, F. 306, A. Simon Conquista, &c. p. 39. Hakluyt, iii. 468. 508.

[*f*] Herrera, dec. 1. lib. ii. c. 16.

seem to be adverse to this passion, and to have a tendency to abate its vigour, yet the rudest nations in every other part of the globe seem to feel its influence more powerfully than the inhabitants of the New World. The negro glows with all the warmth of desire natural to his climate; and the most uncultivated Asiatics discover that sensibility, which, from their situation on the globe, we should expect them to have felt. But the Americans are, in an amazing degree, strangers to the force of this first instinct of nature. In every part of the New World the natives treat their women with coldness and indifference. They are neither the objects of that tender attachment which takes place in civilized society, nor of that ardent desire conspicuous among rude nations. Even in climates where this passion usually acquires its greatest vigour, the savage of America views his female with disdain, as an animal of a less noble species. He is at no pains to win her favour by the assiduity of courtship, and less still solicitous to preserve it by indulgence and gentleness [g]. Missionaries themselves, notwithstanding the austerity of monastic ideas, cannot refrain from expressing their astonishment at the dispassionate coldness of the American young men in their intercourse with the other sex [h]. Nor is this reserve to be ascribed to any opinion which they entertain with respect to the merit of female chastity. That is an idea too refined for a savage, and suggested by a delicacy of sentiment and affection to which he is a stranger.

But in inquiries concerning either the bodily or

[g] Hennepin *Mœurs des Sauvages*, 32, &c. Rochefort *Hist. des Isles Antilles*, p. 461. *Voyage de Coreal*, ii. 141. Rumusio, iii. 309. F. Lozano *Descr. del. Gran Chaco*, 71. Falkner's *Descr. of Patagon.* p. 125. *Lettere di P. Cataneo ap. Muratori Il Christian. Felice*, i. 305. [h] Chanvalon. p. 51. *Lettr. Edif.* tom. xxiv. 318. Tertre, ii. 377. Venegas, i. 81. Ribas *Hist. de los Triumf.* p. 11.

mental qualities of particular races of men, there is not a more common or more seducing error, than that of ascribing to a single cause, those characteristic peculiarities, which are the effect of the combined operation of many causes. The climate and soil of America differ, in so many respects, from those of the other hemisphere, and this difference is so obvious and striking, that philosophers of great eminence have laid hold on this as sufficient to account for what is peculiar in the constitution of its inhabitants. They rest on physical causes alone, and consider the feeble frame and languid desire of the Americans, as consequences of the temperament of that portion of the globe which they occupy. But the influences of political and moral causes ought not to have been overlooked. These operate with no less effect than that on which many philosophers rest as a full explanation of the singular appearances which have been mentioned. Wherever the state of society is such as to create many wants and desires, which cannot be satisfied without regular exertions of industry, the body accustomed to labour becomes robust and patient of fatigue. In a more simple state, where the demands of men are so few and so moderate, that they may be gratified, almost without any effort, by the spontaneous productions of nature, the powers of the body are not called forth, nor can they attain their proper strength. The natives of Chili and of North America, the two temperate regions in the New World, who live by hunting, may be deemed an active and vigorous race, when compared with the inhabitants of the isles, or of those parts of the continent where hardly any labour is requisite to procure subsistence. The exertions of a hunter are not, however, so regular or so continued, as those of persons employed in the culture of the earth, or in the various arts of civilized life, and though his agility may be greater than theirs, his strength is on the whole



inferior. If another direction were given to the active powers of man in the New World, and his force augmented by exercise, he might acquire a degree of vigour which he does not in his present state possess. The truth of this is confirmed by experience. Wherever the Americans have been gradually accustomed to hard labour, their constitutions become robust, and they have been found capable of performing such tasks, as seemed not only to exceed the powers of such a feeble frame as has been deemed peculiar to their country, but to equal any effort of the natives, either of Africa or of Europe [i].

The same reasoning will apply to what has been observed concerning their slender demand for food. As a proof that this should be ascribed as much to their extreme indolence, and often total want of occupation, as to any thing peculiar in the physical structure of their bodies, it has been observed, that in those districts, where the people of America are obliged to exert any unusual effort of activity, in order to procure subsistence, or wherever they are employed in severe labour, their appetite is not inferior to that of other men, and, in some places, it has struck observers as remarkably voracious [k].

The operation of political and moral causes is still more conspicuous, in modifying the degree of attachment between the sexes. In a state of high civilization, this passion, inflamed by restraint, refined by delicacy, and cherished by fashion, occupies and engrosses the heart. It is no longer a simple instinct of nature ; sentiment heightens the ardour of desire, and the most tender emotions of which our frame is susceptible, sooth and agitate the soul. This description, however, applies only to those, who, by their situation, are exempted from the cares and la-

[i] See NOTE XLVI.

[k] Gumilla, ii. 12, 70, 247. Lafitau, i. 515. Ovalle Church. ii. 81. Muratori, i. 295.

bours of life. Among persons of inferior order, who are doomed by their condition to incessant toil, the dominion of this passion is less violent ; their solicitude to procure subsistence, and to provide for the first demand of nature, leaves little leisure for attending to its second call. But if the nature of the intercourse between the sexes varies so much in persons of different rank in polished societies, the condition of man, while he remains uncivilized, must occasion a variation still more apparent. We may well suppose, that amidst the hardships, the dangers, and the simplicity of savage life, where subsistence is always precarious, and often scanty, where men are almost continually engaged in the pursuit of their enemies, or in guarding against their attacks, and where neither dress nor reserve are employed as arts of female allurements, that the attention of the Americans to their women would be extremely feeble, without imputing this solely to any physical defect or degradation in their frame.

It is accordingly observed, that in those countries of America, where, from the fertility of the soil, the mildness of the climate, or some farther advances which the natives have made in improvement, the means of subsistence are more abundant, and the hardships of savage life are less severely felt, the animal passion of the sexes become more ardent. Striking examples of this occur among some tribes seated on the banks of great rivers well stored with food, among others who are masters of hunting-grounds abounding so much with game, that they have a regular and plentiful supply of nourishment with little labour. The superior degree of security and affluence which these tribes enjoy, is followed by their natural effects. The passions implanted in the human frame by the hand of Nature acquire additional force ; new tastes and desires are formed ; the women, as they are more valued and admired,

become more attentive to dress and ornament ; the men, beginning to feel how much of their own happiness depends upon them, no longer disdain the arts of winning their favour and affection. The intercourse of the sexes becomes very different from that which takes place among their ruder countrymen ; and as hardly any restraint is imposed on the gratification of desire, either by religion or laws, or decency, the dissolution of their manners is excessive [l].

Notwithstanding the feeble make of the Americans, hardly any of them are deformed, or mutilated, or defective in any of their senses. All travellers have been struck with this circumstance, and have celebrated the uniform symmetry and perfection of their external figure. Some authors search for the cause of this appearance in their physical condition. As the parents are not exhausted or over-fatigued with hard labour, they suppose that their children are born vigorous and sound. They imagine, that in the liberty of savage life, the human body, naked and unconfined from its earliest age, preserves its natural form ; and that all its limbs and members acquire a juster proportion, than when fettered with artificial restraints, which stint its growth, and distort its shape [m]. Something, without doubt, may be ascribed to the operation of these causes ; but the true reasons of this apparent advantage, which is common to all savage nations, lie deeper, and are closely interwoven with the nature and genius of that state. The infancy of man is so long and so helpless, that it is extremely difficult to rear children among rude nations. Their means of subsistence are not only scanty, but precarious. Such as live by hunting must range over extensive countries, and shift often from place to place. The care of children,

[l] Biet. 389. Charlev. iii. 423. Dumont Mem. sur Louisiane, i. 155.

[m] Piso, p. 6.

as well as every other laborious task, is devolved upon the women. The distresses and hardships of the savage life, which are often such as can hardly be supported by persons in full vigour, must be fatal to those of more tender age. Afraid of undertaking a task so laborious, and of such long duration, as that of rearing their offspring, the women, in some parts of America, procure frequent abortions by the use of certain herbs, and extinguish the first sparks of that life which they were unable to cherish [n]. Sensible that only stout and well-formed children have force of constitution to struggle through such an hard infancy, other nations abandon or destroy such of their progeny as appear feeble or defective, as unworthy of attention [o]. Even when they endeavour to rear all their children without distinction, so great a proportion of the whole number perishes under the rigorous treatment which must be their lot in the savage state, that few of those who laboured under any original frailty attain the age of manhood [p]. Thus, in polished societies, where the means of subsistence are secured with certainty, and acquired with ease; where the talents of the mind are often of more importance than the powers of the body; children are preserved notwithstanding their defects or deformity, and grow up to be useful citizens. In rude nations, such persons are either cut off as soon as they are born, or becoming a burden to themselves and to the community, cannot long protract their lives. But in those provinces of the New World, where, by the establishment of the Europeans, more regular provision has been made for the subsistence of its inhabitants, and they are restrained from laying violent hands on their children,

[n] Ellis' Voyage to Hudson's Bay, 198. Herrera, dec. 7. lib. ix. c. 4. [o] Gumilla Hist. ii. 234. Techo's Hist. of Paraguay, &c. Churchill's Collect. vi. 108. [p] Creuxii Hist. Canad. p. 57.

the Americans are so far from being eminent for any superior perfection in their form, that one should rather suspect some peculiar imbecility in the race; from the extraordinary number of individuals who are deformed, dwarfish, mutilated, blind, or deaf [9].

How feeble soever the constitution of the Americans may be, it is remarkable, that there is less variety in the human form throughout the New World, than in the ancient continent. When Columbus and the other discoverers first visited the different countries of America which lie within the torrid zone, they naturally expected to find people of the same complexion with those in the corresponding regions of the other hemisphere. To their amazement, however, they discovered that America contained no negroes [1]; and the cause of this singular appearance became as much the object of curiosity, as the fact itself was of wonder. In what part or membrane of the body that humour resides which tinges the complexion of the negro with a deep black, it is the business of anatomists to inquire and describe. The powerful operation of heat appears manifestly to be the cause which produces this striking variety in the human species. All Europe, a great part of Asia, and the temperate countries of Africa, are inhabited by men of a white complexion. All the torrid zone in Africa, some of the warmer regions adjacent to it, and several countries in Asia, are filled with people of a deep black colour. If we survey the nations of our continent, making our progress from cold and temperate countries towards those parts which are exposed to the influence of vehement and unremitting heat, we shall find, that the extreme whiteness of their skin soon begins to diminish; that its colour deepens gradually as we advance; and after passing through all the successive gradations of

[9] Voyage de Ulloa, i. 232.

[1] P. Martyr, dec. p. 71.

shade, terminates in an uniform unvarying black. But in America, where the agency of heat is checked and abated by various causes, which I have already explained, the climate seems to be destitute of that force which produces such wonderful effects on the human frame. The colour of the natives of the torrid zone, in America, is hardly of a deeper hue than that of the people in the more temperate parts of their continent. Accurate observers, who had an opportunity of viewing the Americans in very different climates, and in provinces far removed from each other, have been struck with the amazing similarity of their figure and aspect [s].

But though the hand of Nature has deviated so little from one standard in fashioning the human form in America, the creation of fancy hath been various and extravagant. The same fables that were current in the ancient continent, have been revived with respect to the New World, and America too has been peopled with human beings of monstrous and fantastic appearance. The inhabitants of certain provinces were described to be pigmies of three feet high ; those of others to be giants of an enormous size. Some travellers published accounts of people with only one eye, others pretended to have discovered men without heads, whose eyes and mouths were planted in their breasts. The variety of Nature in her productions is indeed so great, that it is presumptuous to set bounds to her fertility, and to reject indiscriminately every relation that does not perfectly accord with our own limited observation and experience. But the other extreme, of yielding a hasty assent, on the slightest evidence, to whatever has the appearance of being strange and marvellous, is still more unbecoming a philosophical inquirer, as, in every period, men are more apt to be betrayed into error, by their weakness in believing too

[s] See NOTE XLVII.

much, than by their arrogance in believing too little. In proportion as science extends, and nature is examined with a discerning eye, the wonders which amused ages of ignorance disappear. The tales of credulous travellers concerning America are forgotten; the monsters which they describe have been searched for in vain; and those provinces where they pretend to have found inhabitants of singular forms, are now known to be possessed by people nowise different from the other Americans.

Though those relations may, without discussion, be rejected as fabulous, there are other accounts of varieties in the human species in some parts of the New World, which rest upon better evidence, and merit more attentive examination. This variety has been particularly observed in three different districts. The first of these is situated in the isthmus of Darien, near the centre of America. Lionel Wafer, a traveller possessed of more curiosity and intelligence than we should have expected to find in an associate of Buccaneers, discovered there a race of men few in number but of a singular make. They are of low stature, according to his description, of a feeble frame, incapable of enduring fatigue. Their colour is a dead milk white; not resembling that of fair people among Europeans, but without any tincture of a blush or sanguine complexion. Their skin is covered with a fine hairy down of a chalky white, the hair of their heads, their eye-brows, and eye-lashes, are of the same hue. Their eyes are of a singular form, and so weak, that they can hardly bear the light of the sun; but they see clearly by moon-light, and are most active and gay in the night [u]. No race similar to this has been discovered in any other part of America. Cortes, indeed, found some persons exactly resembling the white people of Darien, among the rare and monstrous animals which Mon-

[u] Wafer Descript. of Isth. ap. Dampier, iii. p. 346.



tezuma had collected [x]. But as the power of the Mexican empire extended to the provinces bordering on the isthmus of Darien, they were probably brought thence. Singular as the appearance of those people may be, they cannot be considered as constituting a distinct species. Among the negroes of Africa; as well as the natives of the Indian islands, nature sometimes produces a small number of individuals, with all the characteristic features and qualities of the white people of Darien. The former are called *Albinos* by the Portuguese, the latter *Kackerlakes* by the Dutch. In Darien the parents of those *Whites* are of the same colour with the other natives of the country; and this observation applies equally to the anomalous progeny of the negroes and Indians. The same mother who produces some children of a colour that does not belong to the race, brings forth the rest with the complexion peculiar to her country [x]. One conclusion may then be formed with respect to the people described by Wafer, the *Albinos* and the *Kackerlakes*; they are a degenerated breed, not a separate class of men; and from some disease or defect of their parents, the peculiar colour and debility which mark their degradation are transmitted to them. As a decisive proof of this, it has been observed, that neither the white people of Darien, nor the *Albinos* of Africa, propagate their race; their children are of the colour and temperament peculiar to the natives of their respective countries [y].

The second district that is occupied by inhabitants differing in appearance from the other people of America, is situated in a high northern latitude, extending from the coast of Labrador towards the pole, as far as the country is habitable. The people

[x] Cortes ap. Ramus. iii. p. 241, E.

[x] Margrav. Hist. Rer. Nat. Bras. lib. viii. c. 4.

[y] Wafer, p. 348. Demanet Hist. de l'Afrique, ii. 234. Recherche. Philos. sur les Amer. ii. 1, &c. NOTE XLVIII.



scattered over those dreary regions, are known to the Europeans by the name of *Esquimaux*. They themselves, with that idea of their own superiority, which consoles the rudest and most wretched nations, assume the name of *Keralit* or *Men*. They are of a middle size, and robust, with heads of a disproportioned bulk, and feet as remarkably small. Their complexion, though swarthy, by being continually exposed to the rigour of a cold climate, inclines to the European white, rather than to the copper colour of America, and the men have beards which are sometimes bushy and long [*y*]. From these marks of distinction, as well as from one still less equivocal, the affinity of their language to that of the Greenlanders, which I have already mentioned, we may conclude, with some degree of confidence, that the *Esquimaux* are a race different from the rest of the Americans.

We cannot decide with equal certainty concerning the inhabitants of the third district, situated at the southern extremity of America. These are the famous *Patagonians*, who, during two centuries and a half, have afforded a subject of controversy to the learned, and an object of wonder to the vulgar. They are supposed to be one of the wandering tribes, which occupy that vast, but least known region of America, which extends from the river De la Plata to the Straits of Magellan. Their proper station is in that part of the interior country which lies on the banks of the river Negro; but in the hunting season they often roam as far as the straits which separate Tierra del Fuego from the main land. The first accounts of this people were brought to Europe by the companions of Magellan [*z*], who described them as

[*y*] Ellis' Voy. to Huds. Bay, p. 131, 139. De la Potherie. tom. i. p. 79. Wales' Journ. of a Voy. to Churchill River. Phil. Trans. vol. lx. 109.

[*z*] Falkner's Description of Patagonia, p. 102.

atic race, above eight feet high, and of strength proportion to their enormous size. Among several of animals, a disparity in bulk, as considerable, is observed. Some large breeds of horses and exceed the more diminutive races in stature and strength, as far as the Patagonian is supposed to rise above the usual standard of the human body. But they do not attain the highest perfection of their species, in mild climates, or where they find the most abundant food in greatest abundance. It is not then in the uncultivated waste of the Magellanic regions, among a tribe of improvident savages, that we expect to find man, possessing the highest powers of his race, and distinguished by a superiority of size and vigour, far beyond what he has attained in any other part of the earth. The most explicit and unexceptionable evidence, is requisite, in order to establish a fact repugnant to those general principles and laws, which seem to affect the human frame in every other instance, and to decide with respect to the nature and qualities. Such evidence has not hitherto been produced. Though several persons to whose testimony great respect is due, have visited this part of America since the time of Magellan, and have had intercourse with the natives; though some have affirmed that such as they saw were of gigantic stature, others have formed the same conclusion from measuring their footsteps, or from viewing the skeletons of their dead; yet their accounts vary from each other in so many essential points, and are mingled with so many circumstances manifestly false or fabulous, as detract much from their credit. On the other hand, some navigators, and those among the most eminent of their order for discernment and accuracy, have asserted that the natives of Patagonia, whom they had intercourse, though stout and well made, are not of such extraordinary size as to be distinguished from the rest of the human species.

cies [*a*]. The existence of this gigantic race of men seems, then, to be one of those points in natural history, with respect to which a cautious inquirer will hesitate, and will choose to suspend his assent until more complete evidence shall decide, whether he ought to admit a fact, seemingly inconsistent with what reason and experience have discovered concerning the structure and condition of man, in all the various situations in which he has been observed.

In order to form a complete idea with respect to the constitution of the inhabitants of this and the other hemisphere, we should attend not only to the make and vigour of their bodies, but consider what degree of health they enjoy, and to what period of longevity they usually arrive. In the simplicity of the savage state, when man is not oppressed with labour, or enervated by luxury, or disquieted with care, we are apt to imagine that his life will flow on almost untroubled by disease or suffering, until his days be terminated, in extreme old age, by the gradual decays of nature. We find, accordingly, among the Americans, as well as among other rude people, persons, whose decrepit and shrivelled form seems to indicate an extraordinary length of life. But as most of them are unacquainted with the art of numbering, and all of them as forgetful of what is past, as they are improvident for what is to come, it is impossible to ascertain their age, with any degree of precision [*b*]. It is evident, that the period of their longevity must vary considerably, according to the diversity of climates, and their different modes of subsistence. They seem, however, to be every where exempt from many of the distempers which afflict polished nations. None of the maladies, which are the immediate offspring of luxury ever visited them ; and

[*a*] See NOTE XLIX. [*b*] Ulloa Notic. Americ. 323. Bancroft Nat. Hist. of Guiana, 334.

have no names in their languages by which to distinguish this numerous train of adventitious evils. At, whatever be the situation in which man is placed, he is born to suffer ; and his diseases, in the savage state, though fewer in number, are, like those of the animals whom he nearly resembles in his mode of life, more violent, and more fatal. If nature engenders and nourishes distempers of one kind, the rigour and distresses of savage life bring those of another. As men, in this state, are wonderfully improvident, and their means of subsistence precarious, they often pass from extreme want to superfluous plenty, according to the vicissitudes of fortune in the chase, or in consequence of the various degrees of abundance with which the earth affords them its productions, in different seasons. Their insatiable gluttony in the one situation, and their excessive abstinence in the other, are equally pernicious. Though the human constitution may be accused by habit, like that of animals of prey, to alternate long famine, and then to gorge voraciously, it is not a little affected by such sudden and violent variations. The strength and vigour of savages are, at some seasons, impaired by what they suffer from scarcity of food ; at others they are afflicted with disorders arising from indigestion and a superfluity of food. These are so common, that they may be considered as the unavoidable consequence of their mode of subsisting, and cut off considerable numbers in the prime of life. They are likewise extremely subject to consumptions, to pleuritic, asthmatic, and paralytic disorders [c], brought on by the moderate hardships and fatigue which they endure hunting and in war ; or owing to the inclemencies of the seasons to which they are continually exposed. In the savage state, hardships and fatigue [Charlev. N. Fr. iii. 364. Lafitan, ii. 360. De la Potherie,

violently assault the constitution. In polished societies, intemperance undermines it. It is not easy to determine which of them operates with most fatal effect, or tends most to abridge human life. The influence of the former is certainly most extensive. The pernicious consequences of luxury reach only a few members in any community, the distresses of savage life are felt by all. As far as I can judge, after very minute inquiry, the general period of human life is shorter among savages, than in well-regulated and industrious societies.

One dreadful malady, the severest scourge, with which, in this life, offended Heaven chastens the indulgence of criminal desire, seems to have been peculiar to the Americans. By communicating it to their conquerors, they have not only amply avenged their own wrongs, but by adding this calamity to those which formerly embittered human life, they have, perhaps, more than counterbalanced all the benefits which Europe has derived from the discovery of the New World. This distemper, from the country in which it first raged, or from the people by whom it was supposed to have been spread over Europe, has been sometimes called the Neapolitan, and sometimes the French disease. At its first appearance, the infection was so malignant, its symptoms so violent, its operations so rapid and fatal, as to baffle all the efforts of medical skill. Astonishment and terror accompanied this unknown affliction in its progress, and men began to dread the extinction of the human race by such a cruel visitation. Experience, and the ingenuity of physicians, gradually discovered remedies of such virtue as to cure or to mitigate the evil. During the course of two centuries and a half, its virulence seems to have abated considerably. At length, in the same manner with the leprosy, which raged in Europe for some centuries, it may waste its force and disappear ; and in some happier age, this

western infection, like that from the East, may be known only by description [*d*].

II. After considering what appears to be peculiar in the bodily constitution of the Americans, our attention is naturally turned towards the powers and qualities of their minds. As the individual advances from the ignorance and imbecility of the infant state, to vigour and maturity of understanding, something similar to this may be observed in the progress of the species. With respect to it, too, there is a period of infancy, during which several powers of the mind are not unfolded, and all are feeble and defective in their operation. In the early ages of society, while the condition of man is simple and rude, his reason is but little exercised, and his desires move within a very narrow sphere. Hence arise two remarkable characteristics of the human mind in this state. Its intellectual powers are extremely limited; its emotions and efforts are few and languid. Both these distinctions are conspicuous among the rudest and most unimproved of the American tribes, and constitute a striking part of their description.

What, among polished nations, is called speculative reasoning or research, is altogether unknown in the rude state of society, and never becomes the occupation or amusement of the human faculties, until man be so far improved as to have secured, with certainty, the means of subsistence, as well as the possession of leisure and tranquillity. The thoughts and attention of a savage are confined within the small circle of objects, immediately conducive to his preservation or enjoyment. Every thing beyond that, escapes his observation, or is perfectly indifferent to him. Like a mere animal, what is before his eyes interests and affects him; what is out of sight, or at a distance, makes little impression [*e*]. There are several people in America whose limited understand-

[*d*] See NOTE L.

[*e*] Ulloa Noticias Americ. 222.

ings seem not to be capable of forming an arrangement for futurity ; neither their solicitude nor their foresight extend so far. They follow blindly the impulse of the appetite which they feel, but are entirely regardless of distant consequences, and even of those removed in the least degree from immediate apprehension. While they highly prize such things as serve for present use, or minister to present enjoyment, they set no value upon those which are not the object of some immediate want [*f*]. When, on the approach of the evening, a Caribbee feels himself disposed to go to rest, no consideration will tempt him to sell his hammoc. But, in the morning, when he is sallying out to the business or pastime of the day, he will part with it, for the slightest toy that catches his fancy [*g*]. At the close of winter, while the impression of what he has suffered from the rigour of the climate is fresh in the mind of the North American, he sets himself with vigour to prepare materials for erecting a comfortable hut to protect him against the inclemency of the succeeding season ; but as soon as the weather becomes mild, he forgets what is past, abandons his work, and never thinks of it more, until the return of cold compels him, when too late to resume it [*h*].

If it concerns the most interesting, and seemingly the most simple, the reason of man, while rude and destitute of culture, differs so little from the thoughtless levity of children, or the improvident instinct of animals, its exertions in other directions cannot be very considerable. The objects towards which reason turns, and the disquisitions in which it engages, must depend upon the state in which man is placed, and are suggested by his necessities and desires. Dis-

[*f*] Venegas Hist. of Calif. i. 66. Supp. Church. Coll. v. 69. Bord. Descr. des Caraibes, p. 16. Ellis' Voy. 194.

[*g*] Lebat Voyages, ii. 114, 115. Tertre, ii. 385.

[*h*] Adir's Hist. of Amer. Indians, 417.

quisitions, which appear the most necessary and important to men in one state of society, never occur to those in another. Among civilized nations, arithmetic, or the art of numbering, is deemed an essential and elementary science, and in our continent, the invention and use of it reaches back to a period so remote as is beyond the knowledge of history. But among savages, who have no property to estimate, no hoarded treasures to count, no variety of objects or multiplicity of ideas to enumerate, arithmetic is a superfluous and useless art. Accordingly, among some tribes in America it seems to be quite unknown. There are many who cannot reckon farther than three ; and have no denomination to distinguish any number above it [*i*]. Several can proceed as far as ten, others to twenty. When they would convey an idea of any number beyond these, they point to the hair of their head, intimating that it is equal to them, or with wonder declare it to be so great that it cannot be reckoned [*y*]. Not only the Americans, but all nations, while extremely rude, seem to be unacquainted with the art of computation [*z*]. As soon, however, as they acquire such acquaintance or connection with a variety of objects, there is frequent occasion to combine or divide them, their knowledge of numbers increases, so that the state of this art among any people may be considered as one standard, by which to estimate the degree of their improvement. The Iroquois, in North America, as they are much more civilized than the rude inhabitants of Brasil, Paraguay, or Guiana, have likewise made greater advances in this respect ; though even their arithmetic does not extend beyond a thousand, as in

[*i*] Condam. p. 67. Stadius ap de Bry, ix. 128. Lery. *ibid.* 251. Biet. 362. Lettr. Edif. 23. 314. [*y*] Dumont Louis. i. 187. Herrera, dec. 1. lib. iii. c. 3. Biet. 396. Borde, 6. [*z*] This is the case with the Greenlanders, Crantz, i. 225. and with Kamschatkadales, M. l'Abbé Chappé, iii. 17.



their petty transactions they have no occasion for any higher number [*a*]. The Cherokee, a less considerable nation on the same continent, can reckon only as far as a hundred, and to that extent have names for the several numbers; the smaller tribes in their neighbourhood can rise no higher than ten [*b*].

In other respects, the exercise of the understanding among rude nations is still more limited. The first ideas of every human being must be such as he receives by the senses. But, in the mind of man, while in the savage state, there seem to be hardly any ideas but what enter by this avenue. The objects around him are presented to his eye. Such as may be subservient to his use, or can gratify any of his appetites, attract his notice; he views the rest without curiosity or attention. Satisfied with considering them under that simple mode, in which they appear to him as separate and detached, he neither combines them so as to form general classes, nor contemplates their qualities apart from the subject in which they inhere, nor bestows a thought upon the operations of his own mind concerning them. Thus, he is unacquainted with all the ideas which have been denominated *universal*, or *abstract*, or *of reflection*. The range of his understanding must, of course, be very confined, and his reasoning powers be employed merely in what is sensible. This is so remarkably the case with the ruder nations of America, that their languages (as we shall afterwards find) have not a word to express any thing but what is material or corporeal. *Time*, *space*, *substance*, and a thousand other terms which represent abstract and universal ideas, are altogether unknown to them [*c*]. A naked savage, cowering over the fire in his miserable cabin, or stretched under a few branches which afford him a

[*a*] Charlev. Nouv. Franc. iii. 402.

[*b*] Adir's Hist. of Amer. Indians, 77. See NOTE LL.

[*c*] Condam. p. 54.

temporary shelter, has as little inclination as capacity for useless speculation. His thoughts extend not beyond what relates to animal life, and when they are not directed towards some of its concerns, his mind is totally inactive. In situations where no extraordinary effort either of ingenuity or labour is requisite, in order to satisfy the simple demands of nature, the powers of the mind are so seldom roused to any exertion, that the rational faculties continue almost dormant and unexercised. The numerous tribes scattered over the rich plains of South America, the inhabitants of some of the islands, and of several fertile regions on the continent, come under this description. Their vacant countenance, their staring unexpressive eye, their listless inattention, and total ignorance of subjects, which seem to be the first which should occupy the thoughts of rational beings, made such impression upon the Spaniards, when they first beheld those rude people, that they considered them as animals of an inferior order, and could not believe that they belonged to the human species [*d*]. It required the authority of a papal bull to counteract this opinion, and to convince them that the Americans were capable of the functions and entitled to the privileges of humanity [*e*]. Since that time, persons more enlightened and impartial than the discoverers or conquerors of America, have had an opportunity of contemplating the most savage of its inhabitants, and they have been astonished and humbled, with observing how nearly man, in this condition, approaches to the brute creation. But in severer climates, where subsistence cannot be procured with the same ease, where men must unite more closely, and act with greater concert, necessity calls forth their talents, and sharpens their invention, so that the intellectual powers are more

[*d*] Herrera, dec. 2. lib. ii. c. 15.

[*e*] Torquem. Mon. Ind. iii. 198.

exercised and improved. The North American tribes and the natives of Chili, who inhabit the temperate regions in the two great districts of America, are people of cultivated and enlarged understandings, when viewed in comparison with some of those seated in the islands, or on the banks of the Maragnon and Orinoco. Their occupations are more various, their system of policy as well as of war, more complex, their arts more numerous. But, even among them, the intellectual powers are extremely limited in their operations, and unless when turned directly to those objects which interest a savage, are held in no estimation. Both the North Americans and Chilese, when not engaged in some of the functions belonging to a warrior or hunter, loiter away their time in thoughtless indolence, unacquainted with any other subject worthy of their attention, or capable of occupying their minds [f]. If even among them, reason is so much circumscribed in its exertions, and never arrives, in its highest attainments, at the knowledge of those general principles and maxims, which serve as the foundation of science, we may conclude, that the intellectual powers of man in the savage state are destitute of their proper object, and cannot acquire any considerable degree of vigour and enlargement.

From the same causes, the active efforts of the mind are few, and on most occasions, languid. If we examine into the motives which rouse men to activity in civilized life, and prompt them to persevere in fatiguing exertions of an ingenuity or strength, we shall find that they arise chiefly from acquired wants and appetites. These are numerous and importunate; they keep the mind in perpetual agitation, and, in order to gratify them, invention must be always on the stretch, and industry must be incessantly employed. But the desires of simple nature are few, and where a favourable climate yields almost

[f] Lafitau, ii. 2.

stantaneously what suffices to gratify them, they rarely stir the soul, or excite any violent emotion. Hence the people of several tribes in America waste their life in a listless indolence. To be free from occupation, seems to be all the enjoyment towards which they aspire. They will continue whole days stretched out in their hammocks, or seated on the ground in perfect idleness, without changing their position, or raising their eyes from the ground, or uttering a single word [g].

Such is their aversion to labour, that neither the prospect of future good, nor the apprehension of future evil, can surmount it. They appear equally indifferent to both, discovering little solicitude, and taking no precautions to avoid the one, or to secure the other. The cravings of hunger may rouse them; as they devour, with little distinction, whatever appears to appease its instinctive demands, the exertions which these occasions are of short duration. Destitute of industry, as well as variety of desire, they feel not the force of those powerful springs which give impetus to the movements of the mind, and urge the diligent hand of industry to persevere in its efforts. Idleness, in some parts of America, appears in a form so gross, that we can discover no effects of his activity, nor the principle of understanding which should direct it, seems hardly to be unfolded. Like the other savages, he has no fixed residence; he has erected no habitation to shelter him from the inclemency of weather; he has taken no measures for securing his subsistence; he neither sows nor reaps; but wanders about as led in search of the plants and fruits which the earth brings forth in succession; and in quest of the game which he kills in the forests, or of fish which he catches in the rivers.

This description, however, applies only to some tribes. Man cannot continue long in this state of

[g] *Boguer Voy. au Perou*, 102. *Borde*, 15.

feeble and uninformed infancy. He was made for industry and action, and the powers of his nature, as well as the necessity of his condition, urge him to fulfil his destiny. Accordingly, among most of the American nations, especially those seated in rigorous climates, some efforts are employed, and some previous precautions are taken, for securing subsistence. The career of regular industry is begun, and the laborious arm has made the first essays of its power. Still however the improvident and slothful genius of the savage state predominates. Even among those more improved tribes, labour is deemed ignominious and degrading. It is only to work of a certain kind that a man will design to put his hand. The greater part is devolved entirely upon the women. One half of the community remains inactive while the other is oppressed with the multitude and variety of its occupations. Thus their industry is partial, and the foresight which regulates it, is no less limited. A remarkable instance of this occurs in the chief arrangement with respect to their manner of living. They depend for their subsistence, during one part of the year, on fishing; during another, on hunting; during a third, on the produce of their agriculture. Though experience has taught them to foresee the return of those various seasons, and to make some provision for the respective exigencies of each, they either want sagacity to proportion this provision to their consumption, or are so incapable of any command over their appetites, that, from their inconsiderate waste, they often feel the calamities of famine as severely as the rudest of the savage tribes. What they suffer one year does not augment their industry, or render them more provident to prevent similar distresses [4]. This inconsiderate thoughtlessness about futurity, the effect of ignorance, and the

[4] Charlev. N. Fr. iii. 358. Lettr. Edif. 23, 298. Description of N. France, Oubon's Collect. ii. 880. De la Potherie, ii. 63.

cause of sloth, accompanies and characterises man in every stage of savage life [*i*]; and by a capricious singularity in his operations, he is then least solicitous about supplying his wants, when the means of satisfying them are most precarious, and procured with the greatest difficulty [*k*].

. III. After viewing the bodily constitution of the Americans, and contemplating the powers of their minds, we are led, in the natural order of inquiry, to consider them as united together in society. Hitherto our researches have been confined to the operations of understanding respecting themselves, as individuals, now they will extend to the degree of their sensibility and affection towards their species.

The domestic state is the first and most simple form of human association. The union of the sexes, among different animals, is of longer or shorter duration in proportion to the ease or difficulty of rearing their offspring.—Among those tribes where the season of infancy is short, and the young soon acquire vigour or agility, no permanent union is formed. Nature commits the care of training up the offspring to the mother alone, and her tenderness, without any other assistance, is equal to the task. But where the state of infancy is long and helpless, and the joint assiduity of both parents is requisite in tending their feeble progeny, there a more intimate connexion takes place, and continues until the purpose of nature be accomplished, and the new race grow up to full maturity. As the infancy of man is more feeble and helpless than that of any other animal, and he is dependent, during a much longer period, on the care and foresight of his parents, the union between husband and wife came early to be considered not only as a solemn, but as a permanent contract. A general state of promiscuous intercourse

[*i*] Bancroft's Nat. Hist. of Guiana, 326, 333.

[*k*] See NOTE LII.

between the sexes never existed, but in the imagination of poets. In the infancy of society, when men, destitute of arts and industry, lead a hard precarious life, the rearing of their progeny demands the attention and efforts of both parents: and if their union had not been formed and continued with this view, the race could not have been preserved. Accordingly, in America, even among the rudest tribes, a regular union between husband and wife was universal, and the rights of marriage were understood and recognized. In those districts where subsistence was scanty, and the difficulty of maintaining a family was great, the man confined himself to one wife. In warmer and more fertile provinces, the facility of procuring food concurred with the influence of climate, in inducing the inhabitants to increase the number of their wives [1]. In some countries, the marriage union subsisted during life; in others, the impatience of the Americans under restraint of any species, together with their natural levity and caprice, prompted them to dissolve it on very slight pretexts, and often without assigning any cause [m].

But in whatever light the Americans considered the obligation of this contract, either as perpetual, or only as temporary, the condition of women was equally humiliating and miserable. Whether man has been improved by the progress of arts and civilization in society, is a question, which, in the wantonness of disputation, has been agitated among philosophers. That women are indebted to the refinements of polished manners for a happy change in their state, is a point which can admit of no doubt. To despise and to degrade the female sex, is the

[1] Lettr. Edif. 23, 318. Lafitau Mœurs, i. 554. Lery, ap de Bry, iii. 234. Journal de Grillet et Bechamel, p. 88.

[m] Lafitau, i. 580. Jousel Journ. Histor. 345. Lozano Desc. del Gran Chaco, 70. Hennepin Mœurs des Sauvages, p. 30, 33.

characteristic of the savage state in every part of the globe. Man, proud of excelling in strength and in courage, the chief marks of pre-eminence among rude people, treats woman, as an inferior, with disdain. The Americans, perhaps from that coldness and insensibility which has been considered as peculiar to their constitution, add neglect and harshness to contempt. The most intelligent travellers have been struck with this inattention of the Americans to their women. It is not, as I have already observed, by a studied display of tenderness and attachment, that the American endeavours to gain the heart of the woman whom he wishes to marry. Marriage itself, instead of being an union of affection and interests between equals, becomes, among them, the unnatural conjunction of a master with his slave. It is the observation of an author, whose opinions are deservedly of great weight, that wherever wives are purchased, their condition is extremely depressed [n]. They become the property and the slaves of those who buy them. In whatever part of the globe this custom prevails, the observation holds. In countries where refinement has made some progress, women, when purchased, are excluded from society, shut up in sequestered apartments, and kept under the vigilant guard of their masters. In ruder nations, they are degraded to the meanest functions. Among many people of America, the marriage contract is properly a purchase. The man buys his wife of her parents. Though unacquainted with the use of money, or with such commercial transactions as take place in more improved society, he knows how to give an equivalent for any object which he desires to possess. In some places, the suitor devotes his service for a certain time to the parents of the maid whom he courts; in others, he hunts for them occasionally, or assists in cultivating their fields, and

[n] Sketches of Hist. of Man, i. 184.



forming their canoes; in others, he offers presents of such things as are deemed most valuable on account of their usefulness or rarity [*o*]. In return for these, he receives his wife; and this circumstance, added to the low estimation of women among savages, leads him to consider her as a female servant whom he has purchased, and whom he has a title to treat as an inferior. In all unpolished nations, it is true, the functions in domestic economy, which fall naturally to the share of women, are so many, that they are subjected to hard labour, and must bear more than their full portion of the common burden. But in America their condition is so peculiarly grievous, and their depression so complete, that servitude is a name too mild to describe their wretched state. A wife, among most tribes, is no better than a beast of burden, destined to every office of labour and fatigue. While the men loiter out the day in sloth, or spend it in amusement, the women are condemned to incessant toil. Tasks are imposed upon them without pity, and services are received without complacency or gratitude [*p*]. Every circumstance reminds women of this mortifying inferiority. They must approach their lords with reverence; they must regard them as more exalted beings, and are not permitted to eat in their presence [*q*]. There are districts in America where this dominion is so grievous, and so sensibly felt, that some women, in a wild emotion of maternal tenderness, have destroyed their female children in their infancy, in order to deliver them from that intolerable bondage to which they knew they were doomed [*r*].

[*o*] Lafitau *Mœurs*, &c. i. 560, &c. Charlev. iii. 285, &c. Herrera, dec. 4. lib. iv. c. 7. Dumont, ii. 156. [*p*] Tertre, ii. 382. Borde *Relat. des Mœurs des Caraïbes*, p. 21. Biet. 357. Condamine, p. 113. Fermin. i. 79. [*q*] Gumilla, i. 153. Barrere, 164. Labat *Voy.* ii. 78. Chanvalon, 51. Tertre, ii. 300. [*r*] Gumilla, ii. 233, 238. Herrera, dec. 7, lib. ix. c. 4.

Thus the first institution of social life is perverted: That state of domestic union towards which nature leads the human species, in order to soften the heart to gentleness and humanity, is rendered so unequal, as to establish a cruel distinction between the sexes, which forms the one to be harsh and unfeeling, and humbles the other to servility and subjection.

It is owing, perhaps, in some measure, to this state of depression, that women in rude nations are far from being prolific [*s*]. The vigour of their constitution is exhausted by excessive fatigue, and the wants and distresses of savage life are so numerous, as to force them to take various precautions in order to prevent too rapid an increase of their progeny. Among wandering tribes, or such as depend chiefly upon hunting for subsistence, the mother cannot attempt to rear a second child, until the first has attained such a degree of vigour as to be in some measure independent of her care. From this motive, it is the universal practice of the American women to suckle their children during several years [*t*]; and as they seldom marry early, the period of their fertility is over, before they can finish the long but necessary attendance upon two or three children [*u*]. Among some of the least polished tribes, whose industry and foresight do not extend so far as to make any regular provision for their own subsistence, it is a maxim not to burden themselves with rearing more than two children [*x*]; and no such numerous families, as are frequent in civilized societies, are to be found among men in the savage state [*y*]. When twins are born, one of them commonly is abandoned,

[*s*] Lafitau, i. 590. Charlevoix, iii. 304. [*t*] Herrera, dec. 6. lib. i. c. 4. [*u*] Charlev. iii. 303. Dumont Mem. sur. Louisiane, ii. 270. Denys Hist. Natur. de l'Amerique, &c. ii. 365. Charlev. Hist. de Parag. ii. 422. [*x*] Techo's Account of Paraguay, &c. Church. Collect. vi. 108. Lettr. Edif. 24, 200. Lozano Descr. 92. [*y*] Macclaur's Journal, 63.

because the mother is not equal to the task of rearing both [z]. When a mother dies while she is nursing a child, all hope of preserving its life fails, and it is buried together with her in the same grave [a]. As the parents are frequently exposed to want by their own improvident indolence, the difficulty of sustaining their children becomes so great, that it is not uncommon to abandon or destroy them [b]. Thus their experience of the difficulty of training up an infant to maturity, amidst the hardships of savage life, often stifles the voice of nature among the Americans, and suppresses the strong emotions of parental tenderness.

But, though necessity compels the inhabitants of America thus to set bounds to the increase of their families, they are not deficient in affection and attachment to their offspring. They feel the power of this instinct in its full force, and as long as their progeny continue feeble and helpless, no people exceed them in tenderness and care [c]. But in rude nations, the dependence of children upon their parents is of shorter continuance than in polished societies. When men must be trained to the various functions of civil life by previous discipline and education, when the knowledge of abstruse sciences must be taught, and dexterity in intricate arts must be acquired, before a young man is prepared to begin his career of action, the attentive feelings of a parent are not confined to the years of infancy, but extend to what is more remote, the establishment of his child in the world. Even then, his solicitude does not terminate. His protection may still be requisite, and his wisdom and experience still prove useful guides. Thus a permanent connexion is formed; parental tenderness is

[z] Lett. Edif. x. 200. See NOTE LIII. [a] Charlev. iii. 368. Lett. Edif. x. 200. P. Melch. Hernandez Memor. de Cheriqui. Colbert, Collect. Orig. Pap. 1. [b] Venega's Hist. of Californ. i. 82. [c] Gumilla, i. 211. Bict. 290.

exercised, and filial respect returned, throughout the whole course of life. But in the simplicity of the savage state, the affection of parents, like the instinctive fondness of animals, ceases almost entirely as soon as their offspring attain maturity. Little instruction fits them for that mode of life to which they are destined. The parents, as if their duty were accomplished, when they have conducted their children through the helpless years of infancy, leave them afterwards at entire liberty. Even in their tender age, they seldom advise or admonish, they never chide or chastise them. They suffer them to be absolute masters of their own actions [*d*]. In an American hut, a father, a mother, and their posterity, live together like persons assembled by accident, without seeming to feel the obligation of the duties mutually arising from this connection [*e*]. As filial love is not cherished by the continuance of attention or good offices, the recollection of benefits received in early infancy is too faint to excite it. Conscious of their own liberty, and impatient of restraint, the youth of America are accustomed to act as if they were totally independent. Their parents are not objects of greater regard than other persons. They treat them always with neglect, and often with such harshness and insolence, as to fill those who have been witnesses of their conduct with horror [*f*]. Thus the ideas which seem to be natural to man in his savage state, as they result necessarily from his circumstances and condition in that period of his progress, affect the two capital relations in domestic life. They render the union between husband and

[*d*] Charlev. iii. 272. Biet. 390. Gumilla, i. 212. Lafitau, i. 602. Creuxii Hist. Canad. p. 71. Fernandez, Relac. Hist. de los Chequit. 33. [*e*] Charlev. Hist. N. Fr. iii. 273. [*f*] Gumilla, i. 212. Tertre, ii. 376. Charlev. Hist. de N. France, iii. 309. Charlev. Hist. de Parag. i. 115. Lozano, Descript. del Gran Chaco, p. 68, 100, 101. Fernand. Relac. Histor. de los Chequit. 426.

wife unequal. They shorten the duration, and weaken the force, of the connexion between parents and children.

IV. From the domestic state of the Americans, the transition to the consideration of their civil government and political institutions is natural. In every inquiry concerning the operations of men when united together in society, the first object of attention should be their mode of subsistence. Accordingly as that varies, their laws and policy must be different. The institution suited to the ideas and exigencies of tribes, which subsist chiefly by fishing or hunting, and which have as yet acquired but an imperfect conception of any species of property, will be much more simple than those which must take place when the earth is cultivated with regular industry, and a right of property not only in its productions, but in the soil itself, is completely ascertained.

All the people of America, now under review, belong to the former class. But though they may all be comprehended under the general denomination of savage, the advances which they had made in the art of procuring to themselves a certain and plentiful subsistence, were very unequal. On the extensive plains of South America, man appears in one of the rudest states in which he has been ever observed, or, perhaps, can exist. Several tribes depend entirely upon the bounty of Nature for subsistence. They discover no solicitude, they employ little foresight, they scarcely exert any industry, to secure what is necessary for their support. The *Topayers* of Brasil, the *Guaxeros* of Tierra Firmè, the *Caiguas*, the *Moxos*, and several other people of Paraguay, are unacquainted with every species of cultivation. They neither sow nor plant. Even the culture of the manioc, of which cassada bread is made, is an art too intricate for their ingenuity, or too fatiguing to their indolence. The roots which the earth produces

spontaneously, the fruits, the berries, and the seeds, which they gather in the woods, together with lizards and other reptiles, which multiply amazingly with the heat of the climate in a fat soil moistened by frequent rains, supply them with food during some part of the year [*a*]. At other times they subsist by fishing; and Nature seems to have indulged the laziness of the South American tribes by the liberality with which she ministers, in this way, to their wants. The vast rivers of that region in America abound with an infinite variety of the most delicate fish. The lakes and marshes formed by the annual overflowing of the waters, are filled with all the different species, where they remain shut up, as in natural reservoirs, for the use of the inhabitants. They swarm in such shoals, that in some places they are caught without art or industry [*b*]. In others, the natives have discovered a method of infecting the water with the juice of certain plants, by which the fish are so intoxicated, that they float on the surface, and are taken with the hand [*c*]. Some tribes have ingenuity enough to preserve them without salt, by drying or smoaking them upon hurdles over a slow fire [*d*]. The prolific quality of the rivers in South America induces many of the natives to resort to their banks, and to depend almost entirely for nourishment on what their waters supply with such profusion [*e*]. In this part of the globe, hunting seems not to have been the first employment of men, or the first effort of their invention and labour to obtain food. They were fishers before they be-

[*a*] Nieuhoff, *Hist. of Brasil*. Church. Coll. ii. 134. Simon, *Conquista de Tierra Firme*, p. 166. Techo, *Account of Paraguay*, &c. Church. vi. 78. Lettr. Edif. 23, 384, 10, 190. Lozano, *Descrip. del Gran Chaco*, p. 81. Ribas, *Histor. de los Triunfos*, &c. p. 7. [*b*] See NOTE LIV. [*c*] See NOTE LV. [*d*] Condam. 156. Gumilla, ii. 37. Lettr. Edif. 14, 193, 23, 323. Acugoa, *Relat. de la Riv. des Amaz.* 138. [*e*] Berrere, *Relat. de Fr. Equin.* p. 155.

came hunters, and as the occupations of the former do not call for equal exertions of activity, or talents, with those of the latter, people in that state appear to possess neither the same degree of enterprize nor of ingenuity. The petty nations adjacent to the Maragnon and Orinoco, are manifestly the most inactive and least intelligent of all the Americans.

None but tribes contiguous to great rivers can sustain themselves in this manner. The greater part of the American nations, dispersed over the forests with which their country is covered, do not procure subsistence with the same facility. For although these forests, especially in the southern continent of America, are stored plentifully with game [*f*], considerable efforts of activity and ingenuity are requisite in pursuit of it. Necessity incited the natives to the one, and taught them the other. Hunting became their principal occupation; and as it called forth strenuous exertions of courage, of force, and of invention, it was deemed no less honourable than necessary. This occupation was peculiar to the men. They were trained to it from their earliest youth. A bold and dexterous hunter ranked next in fame to the distinguished warrior, and an alliance with the former is often courted in preference to one with the latter [*g*]. Hardly any device, which the ingenuity of man has discovered for ensnaring or destroying wild animals, was unknown to the Americans. While engaged in this favourite exercise, they shake off the indolence peculiar to their nature, the latent powers and vigour of their minds are roused, and they become active, persevering, and indefatigable. Their sagacity in finding their prey, and their address in killing it, are equal. Their reason and their senses being constantly directed towards this one object,

[*f*] P. Martyr, *decad.* p. 324. Gumilla, *ii.* 4, &c. Acugna, *i.* 156.

[*g*] Charlev. *Histoire de la N. France*, *iii.* 115.

the former displays such fertility of invention, and the latter acquire such a degree of acuteness, as appear almost incredible. They discern the footsteps of a wild beast, which escape every other eye, and can follow them with certainty through the pathless forest. If they attack their game openly, their arrow seldom errs from the mark [*h*]; if they endeavour to circumvent it by art, it is almost impossible to avoid their foils. Among several tribes, their young men were not permitted to marry, until they had given such proofs of their skill in hunting as put it beyond doubt that they were capable of providing for a family. Their ingenuity, always on the stretch and sharpened by emulation, as well as necessity, has struck out many inventions, which greatly facilitate success in the chase. The most singular of these is the discovery of a poison in which they dip the arrows employed in hunting. The slightest wound with those invenomed shafts is mortal. If they only pierce the skin, the blood fixes and congeals in a moment, and the strongest animal falls motionless to the ground. Nor does this poison, notwithstanding its violence and subtilty, infect the flesh of the animal which it kills. That may be eaten with perfect safety, and retains its native relish and qualities. All the nations situated upon the banks of the Maragnon and Orinoco are acquainted with this composition, the chief ingredient in which is the juice extracted from the root of the *curare*, a species of withe [*i*]. In other parts of America, they employ the juice of the *manchenille* for the same purpose, and it operates with no less fatal activity. To people possessed of those secrets, the bow is a more destructive weapon than the musket, and, in their skilful hands, does

[*h*] Biet. Voy. de France Equin. 357. Davies' Discov. of the River of Amaz. Purchas. iv. p. 1287. [*i*] Gumilla, ii. 1, &c. Bondam. 208. Recherch. Philos. ii. 239. Bancroft's Nat. Hist. of Guiana, 281, &c.



great execution among the birds and beasts which abound in the forests of America.

But the life of a hunter gradually leads man to a state more advanced. The chase, even where prey is abundant, and the dexterity of the hunter much improved, affords but an uncertain maintenance, and at some seasons it must be suspended altogether. If a savage trusts to his bow alone for food, he and his family will be often reduced to extreme distress [k]. Hardly any region of the earth furnishes man spontaneously with what his wants require. In the mildest climates, and most fertile soils, his own industry and foresight must be exerted in some degree, to secure a regular supply of food. Their experience of this surmounts the abhorrence of labour natural to savage nations, and compels them to have recourse to culture, as subsidiary to hunting. In particular situations, some small tribes may subsist by fishing, independent of any production of the earth, raised by their own industry. But throughout all America, we scarcely meet with any nation of hunters, which does not practise some species of cultivation.

The agriculture of the Americans, however, is neither extensive nor laborious. As game and fish are their principal food, all they aim at by cultivation, is to supply any occasional defect of these. In the southern continent of America, the natives confined their industry to rearing a few plants, which, in a rich soil and warm climate, were easily trained to maturity. The chief of these is *Maize*, well known in Europe by the name of Turkey or Indian wheat, a grain extremely prolific, of simple culture, agreeable to the taste, and affording a strong hearty nourishment. The second is the *Manioc*, which grows to the size of a large shrub, or small tree, and produces roots somewhat resembling parsnips. After carefully squeezing out the juice, these roots are grated down

[k] See NOTE LVI.

o a fine powder, and formed into thin cakes, called *Yassada* bread, which, though insipid to the taste, proves no contemptible food [l]. As the juice of the manioc is a deadly poison, some authors have celebrated the ingenuity of the Americans, in converting a noxious plant into wholesome nourishment. But it should rather be considered as one of the desperate expedients for procuring subsistence, to which necessity reduces rude nations; or, perhaps, men were led to the use of it by a progress, in which there is nothing marvellous. One species of manioc is altogether free of any poisonous quality, and may be eaten without any preparation but that of roasting it in the embers. This, it is probable, was first used by the Americans as food; and necessity having gradually taught them the art of separating its pernicious juice from the other species, they have by experience found it to be more prolific as well as more nourishing [m]. The third is the *plantain*, which, though it rises to the height of a tree, is of such quick growth, that in less than a year it rewards the industry of the cultivator, with its fruit. This, when roasted, supplies the place of bread, and is both palatable and nourishing [n]. The fourth is the *potatoe*, whose culture and qualities are too well known to need any description. The fifth is *pimento*, a small tree, yielding a strong aromatic spice. The Americans, who, like other inhabitants of warm climates, delight in whatever is hot and of poignant flavour, deem this seasoning a necessary of life, and mingle it copiously with every kind of food they take [o].

[l] Sloane Hist. of Jam. Introd. p. 18. Labat. i. 394. Acosta Hist. Ind. Occid. Natur. lib. iv. c. 17. Ulloa, i. 62. Aublet Mem. sur. le Manioc. Hist. des Plantes, tom. ii. p. 65, &c. [m] Martyr, Decad. 301. Labat. i. 411. Gumilla, iii. 192. Machuca Milic. Indiana, 164. See NOTE LVII. [n] See NOTE LVIII. [o] Gumilla, iii. 171. Acosta, lib. iv. c. 20.

Such are the various productions which were the chief object of culture among the hunting tribes on the continent of America, and with a moderate exertion of active and provident industry, these might have yielded a full supply to the wants of a numerous people. But men, accustomed to the free and vagrant life of hunters, are incapable of regular application to labour; and consider agriculture as a secondary and inferior occupation. Accordingly, the provision for subsistence, arising from cultivation, was so limited and scanty among the Americans, that, upon any accidental failure of their usual success in hunting, they were often reduced to extreme distress.

In the islands, the mode of subsisting was considerably different. None of the large animals which abound on the continent were known there. Only four species of quadrupeds, besides a kind of small dumb dog, existed in the islands, the biggest of which did not exceed the size of a rabbit [*p*]. To hunt such diminutive prey, was an occupation which required no effort either of activity or courage. The chief employment of a hunter in the isles was to kill birds, which on the continent are deemed ignoble game, and left chiefly to the pursuit of boys [*q*]. This want of animals, as well as their peculiar situation, led the islanders to depend principally upon fishing for their subsistence [*r*]. Their rivers, and the sea with which they are surrounded, supplied them with this species of food. At some particular seasons, turtle, crabs, and other shell-fish, abounded in such numbers, that the natives could support themselves with a facility in which their indolence delighted [*s*]. At other times, they ate lizards, and various reptiles of odious forms [*t*]. To fishing, the

[*p*] Oviedo, lib. xii. in proem. [*q*] Ribas Hist. de los Triunfos, p. 13. De la Potherie, ii. 33. iii. 20. [*r*] Oviedo, lib. xiii. c. 1. Gomara, Hist. Gener. c. 28. [*s*] Gomara, Hist. Gener. c. 9. Labat. ii. 221, &c. [*t*] Oviedo, lib. xiii. c. 3.

inhabitants of the islands added some degree of agriculture. Maize [*u*], manioc, and other plants, were cultivated in the same manner as on the continent. But all the fruits of their industry, together with what their soil and climate produced spontaneously, afforded them but a scanty maintenance. Though their demands for food were very sparing, they hardly raised what was sufficient for their own consumption. If a few Spaniards settled in any district, such a small addition of supernumerary mouths soon exhausted their scanty stores, and brought on a famine.

Two circumstances, common to all the savage nations of America, concurred with those which I have already mentioned, not only in rendering their agriculture imperfect, but in circumscribing their power in all their operations. They had no tame animals; and they were unacquainted with the useful metals.

In other parts of the globe, man, in his rudest state, appears as lord of the creation, giving law to various tribes of animals, which he has tamed and reduced to subjection. The Tartar follows his prey on the horse which he has reared; or tends his numerous herds, which furnish him both with food and clothing; the Arab has rendered the camel docile, and avails himself of its persevering strength; the Laplander has formed the rein-deer to be subservient to his will; and even the people of Kamschatka have trained their dogs to labour. This command over the inferior creatures is one of the noblest prerogatives of man, and among the greatest efforts of his wisdom and power. Without this, his dominion is incomplete. He is a monarch, who has no subjects; a master, without servants, and must perform every operation by the strength of his own arm. Such was the condition of all the rude nations in America.

[*u*] See NOTE LIX.

Their reason was so little improved, or their union so incomplete, that they seem not to have been conscious of the superiority of their nature, and suffered all the animal creation to retain its liberty, without establishing their own authority over any one species. Most of the animals, indeed, which have been rendered domestic in our continent, do not exist in the New World; but those peculiar to it are neither so fierce, nor so formidable, as to have exempted them from servitude. There are some animals of the same species in both continents. But the rein-deer, which has been tamed and broken to the yoke in the one hemisphere, runs wild in the other. The *bison* of America is manifestly of the same species with the horned cattle of the other hemisphere [x]. The latter, even among the rudest nations of our continent, have been rendered domestic; and, in consequence of his dominion over them, man can accomplish works of labour with greater facility, and has made a great addition to his means of subsistence. The inhabitants of many regions of the New World, where the bison abounds, might have derived the same advantages from it. It is not of a nature so indocile, but that it might have been trained to be as subservient to man as our cattle [y]. But a savage, in that uncultivated state wherein the Americans were discovered, is the enemy of the other animals, not their superior. He wastes and destroys, but knows not how to multiply or to govern them [z].

This, perhaps, is the most notable distinction between the inhabitants of the Ancient and New Worlds, and a high pre-eminence of civilized men above such as continue rude. The greatest operations of man in changing and improving the face of na-

[x] Buffon, Artic. *Bison*. [y] Nouv. Decouverte par Hennepin, p. 192. Kalm. i. 2. 7. [z] Buffon Hist. Nat. ix. 85. Hist. Philos. et Polit. des Etablissem. des Europ. dans les deux Indes, vi. 364.

ture, as well as his most considerable efforts in cultivating the earth, are accomplished by means of the aid which he receives from the animals whom he has tamed and employs in labour. It is by their strength that he subdues the stubborn soil, and converts the desert or marsh into a fruitful field. But man, in his civilized state, is so accustomed to the service of the domestic animals, that he seldom reflects upon the vast benefits which he derives from it. If we were to suppose him, even when most improved, to be deprived of their useful ministry, his empire over nature must in some measure cease, and he would remain a feeble animal, at a loss how to subsist, and incapable of attempting such arduous undertakings as their assistance enables him to execute with ease.

It is a doubtful point, whether the dominion of man over the animal creation, or his acquiring the use of metals, has contributed most to extend his power. The æra of this important discovery is unknown, and in our hemisphere very remote. It is only by tradition, or by digging up some rude instruments of our forefathers, that we learn that mankind were originally unacquainted with the use of metals, and endeavoured to supply the want of them by employing flints, shells, bones, and other hard substances, for the same purposes which metals serve among polished nations. Nature completes the formation of some metals. Gold, silver, and copper are found in their perfect state in the clefts of rocks, in the sides of mountains, or the channels of rivers. These were accordingly the metals first known, and first applied to use. But iron, the most serviceable of all, and to which man is most indebted, is never discovered in its perfect form ; its gross and stubborn ore must feel twice the force of fire, and go through two laborious processes, before it become fit for use. Man was long acquainted with the other metals, before he acquired the art of fabricating iron, or attain-

ed such ingenuity as to perfect an invention, to which he is indebted for those instruments where-with he subdues the earth, and commands all its inhabitants. But in this, as well as in many other respects, the inferiority of the Americans was conspicuous. All the savage tribes, scattered over the continent and islands, were totally unacquainted with the metals which their soil produces in great abundance, if we except some trifling quantity of gold, which they picked up in the torrents that descended from their mountains, and formed into ornaments. Their devices to supply this want of the serviceable metals, were extremely rude and awkward. The most simple operation was to them an undertaking of immense difficulty and labour. To fell a tree with no other instruments than hatchets of stone, was employment for a month [*a*]. To form a canoe into shape, and to hollow it, consumed years; and it frequently began to rot before they were able to finish it [*b*]. Their operations in agriculture were equally slow and defective. In a country covered with woods of the hardest timber, the clearing of a small field destined for culture required the united efforts of a tribe, and was a work of much time and great toil. This was the business of the men, and their indolence was satisfied with performing it in a very slovenly manner. The labour of cultivation was left to the women, who, after digging, or rather stirring the field, with wooden mattocks, and stakes hardened in the fire, sowed or planted it; but they were more indebted for the increase to the fertility of the soil, than to their own rude industry [*c*].

Agriculture, even when the strength of man is seconded by that of the animals which he has subjected to the yoke, and his power augmented by the use of the various instruments with which the dis-

[*a*] Gumilla, iii. 196.  
p. 22.

[*b*] Borde Relat. des Caraibes,  
[*c*] Gumilla, iii. 166, &c. Lettr. Edif. xii. 10.

covery of metals has furnished him, is still a work of great labour ; and it is with the sweat of his brow that he renders the earth fertile. It is not wonderful, then, that people destitute of both these advantages should have made so little progress in cultivation, that they must be considered as depending for subsistence on fishing and hunting, rather than on the fruits of their own labour.

From this description of the mode of subsisting among the rude American tribes, the form and genius of their political institutions may be deduced, and we are enabled to trace various circumstances of distinction between them and more civilized nations.

1. They were divided into small independent communities. While hunting is the chief source of subsistence, a vast extent of territory is requisite for supporting a small number of people. In proportion as men multiply and unite, the wild animals, on which they depend for food, diminish, or fly at a greater distance from the haunts of their enemy. The increase of a society in this state is limited by its own nature, and the members of it must either disperse, like the game which they pursue, or fall upon some better method of procuring food, than by hunting. Beasts of prey are by nature solitary and unsocial, they go not forth to the chase in herds, but delight in those recesses of the forest where they can roam and destroy undisturbed. A nation of hunters resembles them both in occupation and in genius. They cannot form into large communities, because it would be impossible to find subsistence ; and they must drive to a distance every rival who may incroach on those domains, which they consider as their own. This was the state of all the American tribes, the numbers in each were inconsiderable, though scattered over countries of great extent ; they were far removed from one another, and en-



gaged in perpetual hostilities or rivalry [*d*]. In America, the word *nation* is not of the same import as in other parts of the globe. It is applied to small societies, not exceeding, perhaps, two or three hundred persons, but occupying provinces greater than some kingdoms in Europe. The country of Guiana, though of larger extent than the kingdom of France, and divided among a great number of nations, did not contain above twenty-five thousand inhabitants [*e*]. In the provinces which border on the Orinoco, one may travel several hundred miles in different directions, without finding a single hut, or observing the footsteps of a human creature [*f*]. In North America, where the climate is more rigorous, and the soil less fertile, the desolation is still greater. There, journeys of some hundred leagues have been made through uninhabited plains and forests [*g*]. As long as hunting continues to be the chief employment of man to which he trusts for subsistence, he can hardly be said to have occupied the earth [*h*].

2. Nations which depend upon hunting, are, in a great measure, strangers to the idea of property. As the animals on which the hunter feeds are not bred under his inspection, nor nourished by his care, he can claim no right to them, while they run wild in the forest. Where game is so plentiful that it may be caught with little trouble, men never dream of appropriating what is of small value, or of easy acquisition. Where it is so rare, that the labour or danger of the chase requires the united efforts of a tribe, or village, what is killed is a common stock, belonging equally to all, who, by their skill or their courage, have contributed to the success of the ex-

[*d*] Lozano, Descrip. del. Gran Chaco, 59, 62. Fernandez, Relat. Hist. de los Chequit, 162. [*e*] Voyages de Marchais, iv. 353. [*f*] Gumilla, ii. 101. [*g*] M. Fabry, quoted by Buffon, iii. 488. Lafitau, ii. 179. Bossu, Travels through Louisiana, i. 111. See NOTE LX. [*h*] See NOTE LXI.

cursion. The forest, or hunting-grounds, are deemed the property of the tribe, from which it has a title to exclude every rival nation. But no individual arrogates a right to any district of these, in preference to his fellow-citizens. They belong alike to all; and thither, as to a general and undivided store, all repair in quest of sustenance. The same principles by which they regulate their chief occupation, extend to that which is subordinate. Even agriculture has not introduced among them a complete idea of property. As the men hunt, the women labour together, and after they have shared the toils of the seed-time, they enjoy the harvest in common [*i*]. Among some tribes, the increase of their cultivated lands is deposited in a public granary, and divided among them at stated times, according to their wants [*k*]. Among others, though they lay up separate stores, they do not acquire such an exclusive right of property, that they can enjoy superfluity, while those around them suffer want [*l*]. Thus the distinctions arising from the inequality of possessions are unknown. The terms rich or poor enter not into their language, and being strangers to property, they are unacquainted with what is the great object of laws and policy, as well as the chief motive which induced mankind to establish the various arrangements of regular government . *m*].

3. People in this state retain a high sense of equality and independence. Wherever the idea of property is not established, there can be no distinction among men, but what arises from personal qualities. These can be conspicuous only on such occasions as call them forth into exertion. In times of danger, or in affairs of intricacy, the wisdom and experience of age

[*i*] Dr. Ferguson's Essay, 125. [*k*] Gumilla, i. 265.  
 Brickell, Hist. of N. Carol. 327. See NOTE LXII. [*l*] Denys,  
 Hist. Natur. ii. 392, 393. [*m*] P. Martyr, Decad. p. 45.  
 Veneg. Hist. of Californ. i. 66. Lery. Navig. in Brasil, c. 17.

are consulted, and prescribe the measures which ought to be pursued. When a tribe of savages takes the field against the enemies of their country, the warrior of most approved courage leads the youth to the combat [*n*]. If they go forth in a body to the chase, the most expert and adventurous hunter is foremost, and directs their motions. But during seasons of tranquillity and inaction, when there is no occasion to display those talents, all pre-eminence ceases. Every circumstance indicates, that all the members of the community are on a level. They are clothed in the same simple garb. They feed on the same plain fare. Their houses and furniture are exactly similar. No distinction can arise from the inequality of possessions. Whatever forms dependence on one part, or constitutes superiority on the other, is unknown. All are freemen, all feel themselves to be such, and assert with firmness the rights which belong to that condition [*o*]. This sentiment of independence is imprinted so deeply in their nature, that no change of condition can eradicate it, and bend their minds to servitude. Accustomed to be absolute masters of their own conduct, they disdain to execute the orders of another; and having never known controul, they will not submit to correction [*p*]. Many of the Americans, when they found that they were treated as slaves by the Spaniards, died of grief; many destroyed themselves in despair [*q*].

4. Among people in this state, government can assume little authority, and the sense of civil subordination must remain very imperfect. While the idea

[*n*] Acosta, Hist. lib. vi. c. 19. Stadius, Hist. Brasil, lib. ii. c. 13. D. Bry, iii. p. 100. Biet. 361. [*o*] Labat. vi. 124. Brickell, Hist. of Carol. 310. [*p*] See NOTE LXIII. [*q*] Oviedo, lib. iii. c. 6. p. 97. Vega, Conquist. de la Florida, i. 30. ii. 416. Labat. ii. 138. Benzo, Hist. Nov. Orb. lib. iv. c. 25.

of property is unknown, or incompletely conceived ; while the spontaneous productions of the earth, as well as the fruits of industry, are considered as belonging to the public stock, there can hardly be any such subject of difference or discussion among the members of the same community, as will require the hand of authority to interpose in order to adjust it. Where the right of separate and exclusive possession is not introduced, the great object of law and jurisdiction does not exist. When the members of a tribe are called into the field, either to invade the territories of their enemies, or to repel their attacks, when they are engaged together in the toil and dangers of the chase, they then perceive that they are part of a political body. They are conscious of their own connection with the companions in conjunction with whom they act ; and they follow and reverence such as excel in conduct and valour. But, during the intervals between such common efforts, they seem scarcely to feel the ties of political union [r]. No visible form of government is established. The names of *magistrate* and *subject* are not in use. Every one seems to enjoy his natural independence almost entire. If a scheme of public utility be proposed, the members of the community are left at liberty to choose whether they will or will not assist in carrying it into execution. No stature imposes any services as a duty, no compulsory laws oblige them to perform it. All their resolutions are voluntary, and flow from the impulse of their own minds [s]. The first step towards establishing a public jurisdiction has not been taken in those rude societies. The right of revenge is left in private hands [t]. If violence is committed, or blood is shed, the community does not assume the power either of inflicting, or of

[r] Lozano, Descr. del Gran Chaco, 93. Melendez Teforos Verdaderos, ii. 23. See NOTE LXIV. [s] Charlev. Hist. N. France, iii. 266, 268. [t] Herrera, dec. 8. lib. iv. c. 8.

moderating the punishment. It belongs to the family and friends of the person injured or slain to avenge the wrong, or to accept of the reparation offered by the aggressor. If the elders interpose, it is to advise, not to decide, and it is seldom their counsels are listened to ; for as it is deemed pusillanimous to suffer an offender to escape with impunity, resentment is implacable and everlasting [17]. The object of government among savages is rather foreign than domestic. They do not aim at maintaining interior order and police by public regulations, or the exertions of any permanent authority, but labour to preserve such union among the members of their tribe, that they may watch the motions of their enemies, and act against them with concert and vigour.

Such was the form of political order established among the greater part of the American nations. In this state were almost all the tribes spread over the provinces extending eastward of the Mississippi, from the mouth of the St. Laurence to the confines of Florida. In a similar condition were the people of Brasil, the inhabitants of Chili, several tribes in Paraguay and Guiana, and in the countries which stretch from the mouth of the Orinoco to the peninsula of Yucatan. Among such an infinite number of petty associations, there may be peculiarities which constitute a distinction, and mark the various degrees of their civilization, and improvement. But an attempt to trace and enumerate these would be vain, as they have not been observed by persons capable of discerning the minute and delicate circumstances, which serve to discriminate nations resembling one another in their general character and features. The description which I have given of the political institutions that took place among those rude tribes in America, concerning which we have

[17] Charlev. Hist. N. France, iii. 271, 272. Lafit. i. 486. Cassaut, Hist. de Nouvo Reyno de Granada, 226.

received most complete information, will apply, with little variation, to every people, both in its northern and southern division, who have advanced no farther in civilization, than to add some slender degree of agriculture to fishing and hunting.

Imperfect as those institutions may appear, several tribes were not so far advanced in their political progress. Among all those petty nations which trusted for subsistence entirely to fishing and hunting without any species of cultivation, the union was so incomplete, and their sense of mutual dependence so feeble, that hardly any appearance of government or order can be discerned in their proceedings. Their wants are few, their objects of pursuit simple, they form into separate tribes, and act together, from instinct, habit, or conveniency, rather than from any formal concert and association. To this class belong the Californians, several of the small nations in the extensive country of Paraguay, some of the people on the banks of the Orinoco, and on the river St. Magdalene, in the new kingdom of Granada [x].

But though among these last-mentioned tribes there was hardly any shadow of regular government, and even among those which I first described, its authority is slender and confined within narrow bounds, there were, however, some places in America where government was carried far beyond the degree of perfection which seems natural to rude nations. In surveying the political operations of man, either in his savage or civilized state, we discover singular and eccentric institutions, which start as it were from their station, and fly off so wide, that we labour in vain to bring them within the general laws of any system, or to account for them by those principles which influence other communities in a similar situation. Some instances of this occur among those

[x] Venegas, i. 68. Lettr. Edif. ii. 176. Techo Hist. of Parag. Churchill, vi. 78. Hist. Gen. des Voyages, xiv. 74.

people of America, whom I have included under the common denomination of savage. These are so curious and important that I shall describe them, and attempt to explain their origin.

In the New World, as well as in other parts of the globe, cold or temperate countries appear to be the favourite seat of freedom and independence. There the mind like the body, is firm and vigorous. There men, conscious of their own dignity, and capable of the greatest efforts in asserting it, aspire to independence, and their stubborn spirits stoop with reluctance to the yoke of servitude. In warmer climates, by whose influence the whole frame is so much enervated, that present pleasure is the supreme felicity, and mere repose is enjoyment, men acquiesce, almost without a struggle, in the dominion of a superior. Accordingly, if we proceed from north to south along the continent of America, we shall find the power of those vested with authority gradually increasing, and the spirit of the people becoming more tame and passive. In Florida, the authority of the sachems, caziques, or chiefs, was not only permanent, but hereditary. They were distinguished by peculiar ornaments, they enjoyed prerogatives of various kinds, and were treated by their subjects with that reverence, which people accustomed to subjection pay to a master [*y*]. Among the Natchez, a powerful tribe now extinct, formerly situated on the banks of the Mississippi, a difference of rank took place, with which the northern tribes were altogether unacquainted. Some families were reputed noble, and enjoyed hereditary dignity. The body of the people was considered as vile, and formed only for subjection. This distinction was marked by appellations which intimated the high elevation of the one state, and the

[*y*] Cardenas y Cano Ensayo Chronol. a la Hist. de Florida, p. 46. Le Moyne de Morgues Icones Floridæ. Ap. de Bry, p. 1, 4, &c. Charlev. Hist. N. France, iii. 467, 468..

ignominious depression of the other. The former were called *Respectable* ; the latter, the *Stinkards*. The great chief, in whom the supreme authority was vested, is reputed to be a being of superior nature, the brother of the Sun, the sole object of their worship. They approach this great chief with religious veneration, and honour him as the representative of their deity. His will is a law, to which all submit with implicit obedience. The lives of his subjects are so absolutely at his disposal, that if any one has incurred his displeasure, the offender comes with profound humility and offers him his head. Nor does the dominion of the chiefs end with their lives ; their principal officers, their favourite wives, together with many domestics of inferior rank, are sacrificed at their tombs, that they may be attended in the next world by the same persons who served them in this ; and such is the reverence in which they are held, that those victims welcome death with exultation, deeming it a recompense of their fidelity, and a mark of distinction, to be selected to accompany their deceased master [z]. Thus a perfect despotism, with its full train of superstition, arrogance, and cruelty, is established among the Natchez, and by a singular fatality, that people has tasted of the worst calamities incident to polished nations, though they themselves are not far advanced beyond the tribes around them in civility and improvement. In Hispaniola, Cuba, and the larger islands, their caziques or chiefs possessed extensive power. The dignity was transmitted by hereditary right from father to son. Its honours and prerogatives were considerable. Their subjects paid great respect to the caziques, and executed their orders without hesitation or reserve [a]. They were distinguished by peculiar

[z] Dumont Memoir. Hist. sur Louisiane, i. 175. Charlev. Hist. N. France, iii. 419, &c. Lettr. Edif. 20, 106, 111.

[a] Herrera, dec. 1. lib. i. c. 16. lib. iii. c. 44. p. 83. Life of Columb. ch. 32.



ornaments, and in order to preserve or augment the veneration of the people, they had the address to call in the aid of superstition to uphold their authority. They delivered their mandates as the oracles of heaven, and pretended to possess the power of regulating the seasons, and of dispensing rain or sunshine, according as their subjects stood in need of them.

In some parts of the southern continent, the power of the caziques seems to have been as extensive as in the isles. In Bogota, which is now a province of the new kingdom of Granada, there was settled a nation, more considerable in number and more improved in the various arts of life, than any in America except the Mexicans and Peruvians. The people of Bogota subsisted chiefly by agriculture. The idea of property was introduced among them, and its rights, secured by laws, handed down by tradition, and observed with great care [*b*]. They lived in towns which may be termed large, when compared with those in other parts of America. They were clothed in a decent manner, and their houses may be termed commodious, when compared with those of the small tribes around them. The effects of this uncommon civilization were conspicuous. Government had assumed a regular form. A jurisdiction was established, which took cognizance of different crimes, and punished them with rigour. A distinction of ranks was known; their chief, to whom the Spaniards gave the title of monarch, and who merited that name on account of his splendour as well as his power, reigned with absolute authority. He was attended by officers of various conditions; he never appeared in public without a numerous retinue; he was carried in a sort of palanquin with much pomp, and harbingers went before him to sweep the road and strew it with flowers. This un-

[*b*] Piedrahita Hist. de las Conquist. del N. Rayno de Gran. p. 40.

common pomp was supported by presents or taxes received from his subjects, to whom their prince was such an object of veneration, that none of them presumed to look him directly in the face, or ever approached him but with an averted countenance [c]. There were other tribes on the same continent, among which, though far less advanced than the people of Bogota in their progress towards refinement, the freedom and independence, natural to man in his savage state, was much abridged, and their caziques had assumed extensive authority.

It is not easy to point out the circumstances, or to discover the causes which contributed to introduce and establish among each of those people a form of government so different from that of the tribes around them, and so repugnant to the genius of rude nations. If the persons who had an opportunity of observing them in their original state, had been more attentive and more discerning, we might have received information from their conquerors sufficient to guide us in this inquiry. If the transactions of people unacquainted with the use of letters, were not involved in impenetrable obscurity, we might have derived some information from this domestic source. But as nothing satisfactory can be gathered, either from the accounts of the Spaniards, or from their own traditions, we must have recourse to conjectures, in order to explain the irregular appearances in the political state of the people whom I have mentioned. As all those tribes which had lost their native liberty and independence were seated in the Torrid Zone, or in countries approaching to it, the climate may be supposed to have had some influence in forming their minds to that servitude, which seems to be the destiny of man in those regions of the globe. But though the influence of climate, more powerful

[c] Herrera, dec. 6. lib. i. c. 2. lib. v. c. 56. Piedrahita, c. 5. p. 25, &c. Gomara, Hist. c. 72.

than that of any other natural cause, is not to be overlooked ; that alone cannot be admitted as a solution of the point in question. The operations of men are so complex, that we must not attribute the form which they assume, to the force of a single principle or cause. Although despotism be confined in America to the Torrid Zone, and to the warm regions bordering upon it, I have already observed that these countries contain various tribes, some of which possess a high degree of freedom, and others are altogether unacquainted with the restraints of government. The indolence and timidity peculiar to the inhabitants of the islands, render them so incapable of the sentiments or efforts necessary for maintaining independence, that there is no occasion to search for any other cause of their tame submission to the will of a superior. The subjection of the Natchez, and of the people of Bogota, seems to have been the consequence of a difference in their state from that of the other Americans. They were settled nations, residing constantly in one place. Hunting was not the chief occupation of the former, and the latter seem hardly to have trusted to it for any part of their subsistence. Both had made such progress in agriculture and arts, that the idea of property was introduced in some degree in the one community, and fully established in the other. Among people in this state, avarice and ambition have acquired objects, and have begun to exert their power ; views of interest allure the selfish ; the desire of pre-eminence excites the enterprising ; dominion is courted by both ; and passions unknown to man in his savage state prompt the interested and ambitious to encroach on the rights of their fellow-citizens. Motives, with which rude nations are equally unacquainted, induce the people to submit tamely to the usurped authority of their superiors. But even among nation in this state, the spirit of subjects could not have

been rendered so obsequious, or the power of rulers so unbounded, without the intervention of superstition. By its fatal influence, the human mind, in every stage of its progress, is depressed, and its native vigour and independence subdued. Whoever can acquire the direction of this formidable engine, is secure of dominion over his species. Unfortunately for the people whose institutions are the subject of inquiry, this power was in the hands of their chiefs. The caziques of the isles could put what responses they pleased into the mouths of their *Cemis* or gods; and it was by their interposition, and in their name, that they imposed any tribute or burden on their people [d]. The same power and prerogative was exercised by the great chief of the Natchez as the principal minister as well as the representative of the Sun, their deity. The respect which the people of Bogota paid to their monarchs was likewise inspired by religion, and the heir apparent of the kingdom was educated in the innermost recess of their principal temple, under such austered discipline, and with such peculiar rites, as tended to fill his subjects with high sentiments concerning the sanctity of his character, and the dignity of his station [e]. Thus superstition, which, in the rudest period of society, is either altogether unknown, or wastes its force in childless unmeaning practices, had acquired such an ascendant over those people of America, who had made some little progress towards refinement, that it became the chief instrument of bending their minds to an untimely servitude, and subjected them, in the beginning of their political career, to a despotism hardly less rigorous than that which awaits nations in the last stage of their corruption and decline.

V. After examining the political institutions of

[d] Herrera, dec. 1. lib. iii. c. 3.

[e] Piedrahita, p. 27.

the rude nations in America, the next object of attention is their art of war, or their provision for public security and defence. The small tribes dispersed over America are not only independent and unconnected, but engaged in perpetual hostilities with one another [f]. Though mostly strangers to the idea of separate property vested in any individual, the rudest of the American nations are well acquainted with the rights of each community to its own domains. This right they hold to be perfect and exclusive, entitling the possessor to oppose the encroachment of neighbouring tribes. As it is of the utmost consequence to prevent them from destroying or disturbing the game in their hunting-grounds, they guard this national property with a jealous attention. But as their territories are extensive, and the boundaries of them not exactly ascertained, innumerable subjects of dispute arise, which seldom terminate without bloodshed. Even in this simple and primitive state of society, interest is a source of discord, and often prompts savage tribes to take arms in order to repel or punish such as encroach on the forests or plains, to which they trust for subsistence.

But interest is not either the most frequent or the most powerful motive of the incessant hostilities among rude nations. These must be imputed to the passion of revenge, which rages with such violence in the breast of savages, that eagerness to gratify it may be considered as the distinguishing characteristic of men in their uncivilized state. Circumstances of powerful influence, both in the interior government of rude tribes, and in their external operations against foreign enemies, concur in cherishing and adding strength to a passion fatal to the general tranquillity. When the right of redressing his own wrongs is left in the hands of every individual, injuries are felt with exquisite sensibility, and vengeance exercised

[f] Ribas, Hist. de los Triump. p. 9.

with unrelenting rancour. No time can obliterate the memory of an offence, and it is seldom that it can be expiated but by the blood of the offender. In carrying on their public wars, savage nations are influenced by the same ideas, and animated with the same spirit, as in prosecuting private vengeance. In small communities every man is touched with the injury or affront offered to the body of which he is member, as if it were a personal attack upon his own honour or safety. The desire of revenge is communicated from breast to breast, and soon kindles into rage. As feeble societies can take the field only in small parties, each warrior is conscious of the importance of his own arm, and feels that to it is committed a considerable portion of the public vengeance. War, which between extensive kingdoms is carried on with little animosity, is prosecuted by small tribes with all the rancour of a private quarrel. The resentment of nations is as implacable as that of individuals. It may be dissembled or suppressed, but is never extinguished ; and often when least expected or dreaded, it bursts out with redoubled fury [g]. When polished nations have obtained the glory of victory, or have acquired an addition of territory, they may terminate a war with honour. But savages are not satisfied until they extirpate the community which is the object of their hatred. They fight not to conquer, but to destroy. If they engage in hostilities, it is with a resolution never to see the face of the enemy in peace, but to prosecute the quarrel with immortal enmity [h]. The desire of vengeance is the first, and almost the only principle, which a savage instills into the minds of his children [i].

[g] Burcher, *Hist. Nat. de N. France*, p. 93. Charlev. *Hist. de N. France*, iii. 215, 251. Lery ap. de Bry, iii. 204. Creux. *Hist. Canad.* p. 72. Lozano, *Descr. del Gran Chaco*, 95. Hennep. *Mœurs des Sauv.* 40. [h] Charlev. *Hist. N. Fr.* iii. 251. Colden, i. 108. ii. 126. Barrere, p. 170, 173. [i] Charlev. *Hist. N. Fr.* iii. 326. Lozano, *Hist. de Parag.* i. 144.

This grows up with him as he advances in life ; and as his attention is directed to few objects, it acquires a greater degree of force unknown among men, whose passions are dissipated and weakened by the variety of their occupations and pursuits. The desire of vengeance, which takes possession of the heart of savages, resembles the instinctive rage of an animal, rather than the passion of a man. It turns with undiscerning fury, even against inanimate objects. If hurt accidentally by a stone, they often seize it in a transport of anger, and endeavour to wreak their vengeance upon it [*k*]. If struck with an arrow in battle, they will tear it from the wound, break and bite it with their teeth, and dash it on the ground [*l*]. With respect to their enemies, the rage of vengeance knows no bounds. When under the dominion of this passion, man becomes the most cruel of all animals. He neither pities, nor forgives, nor spares.

The force of this passion is so well understood by the Americans themselves, that they always apply to it, in order to excite their people to take arms. If the elders of any tribe attempt to rouse their youth from sloth, if a chief wishes to allure a band of warriors to follow him in invading an enemy's country, the most persuasive topics of their martial eloquence are drawn from revenge. "The bones of our countrymen," say they "lie uncovered ; their bloody bed has not been washed clean. Their spirits cry against us ; they must be appeased. Let us go and devour the people by whom they were slain. Sit no longer inactive upon your mats ; lift the hatchet, console the spirits of the dead, and tell them that they shall be avenged [*m*]."

Animated with such exhortations, the youth snatch

[*k*] Lery ap. de Bry, iii. 190. [*l*] Ibid. iii. 208. Herrera, dec. 1. lib. vi. c. 8. [*m*] Charlev. Hist. N. Fr. iii. 216, 217. Lery ap. de Bry, iii. 204.

their arms in a transport of fury, raise the song of war, and burn with impatience to embroil their hands in the blood of their enemies. Private chiefs often assemble small parties, and invade a hostile tribe, without consulting the rulers of the community. A single warrior, prompted by caprice or revenge, will take the field alone, and march several hundred miles to surprise and cut off a straggling enemy [n]. The exploits of a noted warrior, in such solitary excursions, often form the chief part in the history of an American campaign [o]; and their elders connive at such irregular sallies, as they tend to cherish a martial spirit, and accustom their people to enterprise and danger [p]. But when a war is national, and undertaken by public authority, the deliberations are formal and slow. The elders assemble, they deliver their opinions in solemn speeches, they weigh with maturity the nature of the enterprise, and balance its beneficial or disadvantageous consequences with no inconsiderable portion of political discernment or sagacity. Their priests and soothsayers are consulted, and sometimes they ask the advice even of their women [q]. If the determination be for war, they prepare for it with much ceremony. A leader offers to conduct the expedition, and is accepted. But no man is constrained to follow him; the resolution of the community to commence hostilities, imposes no obligation upon any member to take part in the war. Each individual is still master of his own conduct, and his engagement in the service is perfectly voluntary [r].

The maxims by which they regulate their military operations, though extremely different from those which take place among more civilized and populous

[n] See NOTE LXV. [o] See NOTE LXVI. [p] Bossu, i. 140. Lery ap. de Bry, 215. Hennepin, Mœurs des Sauv. 41. Laëtus, ii. 169. [q] Charlev. Hist. N. Fr. 215, 268. Biet. 67, 380. [r] Charlev. Hist. N. Fr. 217, 218.



nations, are well suited to their own political state, and the nature of the country in which they act. They never take the field in numerous bodies, as it would require a greater effort of foresight and industry, than is usual among savages, to provide for their subsistence, during a march of some hundred miles through dreary forests, or during a long voyage upon their lakes and rivers. Their armies are not encumbered with baggage or military stores. Each warrior, besides his arms, carries a mat and a small bag of pounded maize, and with these is completely equipped for any service. While at a distance from the enemy's frontier, they disperse through the woods, and support themselves with the game which they kill, or the fish which they catch. As they approach nearer to the territories of the nation which they intend to attack, they collect their troops, and advance with greater caution. Even in their hottest and most active wars, they proceed wholly by stratagem and ambuscade. They place not their glory in attacking their enemies with open force. To surprise and destroy is the greatest merit of a commander, and the highest pride of his followers. War and hunting are their only occupations, and they conduct both with the same spirit and the same arts. They follow the track of their enemies through the forest. They endeavour to discover their haunts, they lurk in some thicket near to these, and, with the patience of a sportsman lying in wait for game, will continue in their station day after day, until they can rush upon their prey when most secure, and least able to resist them. If they meet no straggling party of the enemy, they advance towards their villages, but with such solicitude to conceal their own approach, that they often creep on their hands and feet through the woods, and paint their skins of the same colour with the withered leaves,

in order to avoid detection [s]. If so fortunate as to remain unobserved, they set on fire the enemy's huts in the dead of night, and massacre the inhabitants, as they fly naked and defenceless from the flames. If they hope to effect a retreat without being pursued, they carry off some prisoners, whom they reserve for a more dreadful fate. But if, notwithstanding all their address and precautions, they find that their motions are discovered, that the enemy has taken the alarm, and is prepared to oppose them, they usually deem it most prudent to retire. They regard it as extreme folly to meet an enemy who is on his guard, upon equal terms, or to give battle in an open field. The most distinguished success is a disgrace to a leader if it has been purchased with any considerable loss of his followers [t]; and they never boast of a victory, if stained with the blood of their own countrymen [u]. To fall in battle, instead of being reckoned an honourable death, is a misfortune which subjects the memory of a warrior to the imputation of rashness or imprudence [x].

This system of war was universal in America, and the small uncivilized tribes, dispersed through all its different regions and climates, display more craft than boldness in carrying on their hostilities. Struck with this conduct, so opposite to the ideas and maxims of Europeans, several authors contend that it flows from a feeble and dastardly spirit peculiar to the Americans, which is incapable of any generous or manly exertion [y]. But when we reflect that many of these tribes, on occasions which call for extraordinary efforts, not only defend themselves with obsti-

[s] Charlev. Hist. N. Fr. iii. 237, 238. Hennep. Mœurs des Sauv. p. 59. [t] See NOTE I. XVII. [u] Charlev. Hist. N. Fr. iii. 238, 307. Biet. 381. Lafitau, Mœurs des Sauv. ii. 248. [x] Charlev. iii. 376. See NOTE LXVIII. [y] Recherches Philos. sur les Americ. i. 115. Voyage de March. iv. 410.

nate resolution, but attack their enemies with the most daring courage, and that they possess fortitude of mind superior to the sense of danger or the fear of death, we must ascribe their habitual caution to some other cause than constitutional timidity [z]. The number of men in each tribe is so small, the difficulty of rearing new members, amidst the hardships and dangers of savage life, so great, that the life of a citizen is extremely precious, and the preservation of it becomes a capital object in their policy. Had the point of honour been the same among the feeble American tribes as among the powerful nations of Europe, had they been taught to court fame or victory in contempt of danger and death, they must have been ruined by maxims so ill adapted to their condition. But wherever their communities are more populous, so that they can act with considerable force, and can sustain the loss of several of their members, without being sensibly weakened, the military operations of the Americans more nearly resemble those of other nations. The Brasilians, as well as the tribes situated upon the banks of the river De la Plata, often take the field in such numerous bodies, as deserve the name of armies [a]. They defy their enemies to the combat, engage in regular battles, and maintain the conflict with that desperate ferocity which is natural to men, who, having no idea of war but that of exterminating their enemies, never give or take quarter [b]. In the powerful empires of Mexico and Peru, great armies were assembled, frequent battles were fought, and the theory as well as practice of war were different from what took place in those petty societies which assume the name of nations.

But though vigilance and attention are the quali-

[z] Lafitan, Mœurs des Sauv. ii. 248, 249. Charlev. N. Fr. iii. 307. [a] Fabri Veriss. Descrip. Indiæ ap. de Bry, vii. p. 42. [b] See NOTE LXIX.

ties chiefly requisite, where the object of war is to deceive and to surprise ; and though the Americans, when acting singly, display an amazing degree of address in concealing their own motions, and discovering those of an enemy, yet it is remarkable that, when they take the field in parties, they can seldom be brought to observe the precautions most essential to their own security. Such is the difficulty of accustoming savages to subordination, or to act in concert ; such is their impatience under restraint, and such their caprice and presumption, that it is rarely they can be brought to conform themselves to the counsels and directions of their leaders. They never station centinels around the place where they rest at night, and after marching some hundred miles to surprise an enemy, are often surprised themselves, and cut off, while sunk in as profound sleep as if they were not within reach of danger [c].

If, notwithstanding this negligence and security, which often frustrate their most artful schemes, they catch the enemy unprepared, they rush upon them with the utmost ferocity, and tearing off the scalps of all those who fall victims to their rage [d], they carry home those strange trophies in triumph. These they preserve as monuments, not only of their own prowess, but of the vengeance which their arm has inflicted upon the people who were objects of public resentment [e]. They are still more solicitous to seize prisoners. During their retreat, if they hope to effect it unmolested, the prisoners are commonly exempt from any insult, and treated with some degree of humanity, though guarded with the most strict attention.

But after this temporary suspension, the rage of the conquerors rekindles with new fury. As soon

[c] Charlev. N. Fr. iii. 236, 237. Lettr. Edif. 17, 308, 20, 130. Lafitau, Mœurs, ii. 247. Labontan, ii. 176. [d] See NOTE LXX. [e] Lafitau, Mœurs, ii. 256.

as they approach their own frontier, some of their number are dispatched to inform their countrymen with respect to the success of the expedition. Then the prisoners begin to feel the wretchedness of their condition. The women of the village, together with the youth who have not attained to the age of bearing arms, assemble, and forming themselves into two lines, through which the prisoners must pass, beat and bruise them with sticks or stones in a cruel manner [*f*]. After this first gratification of their rage against their enemies, follow lamentations for the loss of such of their own countrymen as have fallen in the service, accompanied with words and actions which seem to express the utmost anguish and grief. But, in a moment, upon a signal given, their tears cease; they pass, with a sudden and unaccountable transition, from the depths of sorrow to transports of joy; and begin to celebrate their victory with all the wild exultation of a barbarous triumph [*g*]. The fate of the prisoners remains still undecided. The old men deliberate concerning it. Some are destined to be tortured to death, in order to satiate the revenge of the conquerors; some to replace the members which the community has lost in that or former wars. They who are reserved for this milder fate, are led to the huts of those whose friends have been killed. The women meet them at the door, and if they receive them, their sufferings are at an end. They are adopted into the family, and, according to their phrase, are seated upon the mat of the deceased. They assume his name, they hold the same rank, and are treated thenceforward with all the tenderness due to a father, a brother, a husband, or a friend. But, if either from caprice, or an unrelenting desire of revenge, the women of any family refuse to accept of the prisoner who is offered to

[*f*] Lahontan, ii. 184.

[*g*] Charlev. Hist. N. Fr. iii. 241. Lafitau, Mœurs, ii. 264.

them, his doom is fixed. No power can then save him from torture and death.

While their lot is in suspense, the prisoners themselves appear altogether unconcerned about what may befall them. They talk, they eat, they sleep, as if they were perfectly at ease, and no danger impending. When the fatal sentence is intimated to them, they receive it with an unaltered countenance, raise their death-song, and prepare to suffer like men. Their conquerors assemble as to a solemn festival, resolved to put the fortitude of the captive to the utmost proof. A scene ensues, the bare description of which is enough to chill the heart with horror, wherever men have been accustomed, by milder institutions, to respect their species, and to melt into tenderness at the sight of human sufferings. The prisoners are tied naked to a stake, but so as to be at liberty to move round it. All who are present, men, women, and children, rush upon them like furies. Every species of torture is applied that the rancour of revenge can invent. Some burn their limbs with red-hot irons, some mangle their bodies with knives, others tear their flesh from their bones, pluck out their nails by the roots, and rend and twist their sinews. They vie with one another in refinements of torture. Nothing sets bounds to their rage but the dread of abridging the duration of their vengeance by hastening the death of the sufferers; and such is their cruel ingenuity in tormenting, that by avoiding industriously to hurt any vital part, they often prolong this scene of anguish for several days. In spite of all that they suffer, the victims continue to chant their death-song with a firm voice, they boast of their own exploits, they insult their tormentors for their want of skill in avenging their friends and relations, they warn them of the vengeance which awaits them on account of what they are now doing, and excite their ferocity

by the most provoking reproaches and threats. To display undaunted fortitude in such dreadful situations, is the noblest triumph of a warrior. To avoid the trial by a voluntary death, or to shrink under it, is deemed infamous and cowardly. If any one betrays symptoms of timidity, his tormentors often dispatch him at once with contempt, as unworthy of being treated like a man [*h*]. Animated with those ideas, they endure, without a groan, what it seems almost impossible that human nature should sustain. They appear to be not only insensible of pain, but to court it. "Forbear," said an aged chief of the Iroquois, when his insults had provoked one of his tormentors to wound him with a knife, "forbear these stabs of your knife, and rather let me die by fire, that those dogs, your allies, from beyond the sea, may learn by my example to suffer like men [*i*]." This magnanimity, of which there are frequent instances among the American warriors, instead of exciting admiration, or calling forth sympathy, exasperates the fierce spirits of their torturers to fresh acts of cruelty [*k*]. Weary at length of contending with men, whose constancy of mind they cannot vanquish, some chief in a rage puts a period to their sufferings, by dispatching them with his dagger or club [*l*].

This barbarous scene is often succeeded by one no less shocking. As it is impossible to appease the fell spirit of revenge which rages in the heart of a savage, this frequently prompts the Americans to devour those unhappy persons, who have been the victims of their cruelty. In the ancient world, tradition has preserved the memory of barbarous nations of can-

[*h*] De la Potherie, ii. 237. iii. 48. [*i*] Colden, Hist. of Five Nations, i. 200. [*k*] Voy. de Lahon. i. 236. [*l*] Charlev. Hist. N. Fr. iii. 243, &c. Lafitau, Mœurs, ii. 265. Crevier, Hist. Canad. p. 73. Hennep. Mœurs des Sauv. p. 64, &c. Labout. i. 238, &c. Tertre, ii. 405. De la Potherie, ii. 22, &c.

nibals, who fed on human flesh. But in every part of the New World there were people to whom this custom was familiar. It prevailed in the southern continent [*m*], in several of the islands [*n*], and in various districts of North America [*o*]. Even in those parts, where circumstances, with which we are unacquainted, had in a great measure abolished this practice, it seems formerly to have been so well known, that it is incorporated into the idiom of their language. Among the Iroquois, the phrase by which they express their resolution of making war against an enemy is, "Let us go and eat that nation." If they solicit the aid of a neighbouring tribe, they invite it to "eat broth made of the flesh of their enemies [*p*]." Nor was the practice peculiar to rude unpolished tribes; the principle from which it took rise is so deeply rooted in the minds of the Americans, that it subsisted in Mexico, one of the civilized empires in the New world, and relics of it may be discovered among the more mild inhabitants of Peru. It was not scarcity of food, as some authors imagine, and the importunate cravings of hunger, which forced the Americans to those horrid repasts on their fellow-creatures. Human flesh was never used as common food in any country, and the various relations concerning people who reckoned it among the stated means of subsistence, flow from the credulity and mistakes of travellers. The rancour of revenge first prompted men to this barbarous action [*q*]. The fiercest tribes devoured none but prisoners taken in war, or such as they regarded as

[*m*] *Stadius ap. de Bry*, iii. 123. *Lery*, *ibid.* 210. *Biet.* 384. *Lettr. Edif.* 23, 341. *Pilo*, 8. *Condam.* 84, 97. *Ribas*, *Hist. de los Triunph.* 173.

[*n*] *Life of Columbus*, 529. *Mart. Dec.* p. 18. *Tertre*, ii. 405.

[*o*] *Dumont*, *Mem.* i. 254. *Charlev. Hist. N. Fr.* i. 259. ii. 14. iii. 21. *De la Potherie*, iii. 50.

[*p*] *Charlev. Hist. N. Fr.* 208, 209. *Lettr. Edif.* 23. p. 277. *De la Potherie*, ii. 298. See NOTE LXXI.

[*q*] *Biet.* 383. *Blanco*, *Conversion de Pirito*, p. 28. *Bancroft*, *Nat. Hist. of Guiana*, p. 259, &c.



enemies [*r*]. Women and children who were not the objects of enmity, if not cut off in the fury of their first inroad into an hostile country, seldom suffered by the deliberate effects of their revenge [*s*].

The people of South America gratify their revenge in a manner somewhat different, but with no less unrelenting rancour. Their prisoners, after meeting at their first entrance with the same rough reception as among the North Americans [*t*], are not only exempt from injury, but treated with the greatest kindness. They are feasted and carassed, and some beautiful young women are appointed to attend and solace them. It is not easy to account for this part of their conduct, unless we impute it to a refinement in cruelty. For, while they seem studious to attach the captives to life, by supplying them with every enjoyment that can render it agreeable, their doom is irrevocably fixed. On a day appointed, the victorious tribe assembles, the prisoner is brought forth with great solemnity, he views the preparations for the sacrifice with as much indifference as if he himself were not the victim, and meeting his fate with undaunted firmness, is dispatched with a single blow. The moment he falls, the women seize the body and dress it for the feast. They besmear their children with the blood, in order to kindle in their bosoms a hatred of their enemies, which is never extinguished, and all join in feeding upon the flesh with amazing greediness and exultation [*u*]. To devour the body of a slaughtered enemy, they deem the most complete and exquisite gratification of revenge. Wherever this practice prevails, captives never escape death, but they are not tortured with the same cruelty as among tribes which are less accustomed to such horrid feasts [*x*].

[*r*] See NOTE LXXII.

[*s*] Biet. 382. Bandini, Vita di Americo, 84. Tertre, 405. Fermin. Descrip. de Surin. i. 54. [*t*] Stadius ap. de Bry, iii. p. 40, 123. [*u*] Stadius ap. de Bry, iii. 128, &c. Lery, ibid. 210. [*x*] See NOTE LXXIII.

As the constancy of every American warrior may be put to such severe proof, the great object of military education and discipline in the New World is to form the mind to sustain it. When nations carry on war with open force, defy their enemies to the combat, and vanquish them by the superiority of their skill or courage, soldiers are trained to be active, vigorous, and enterprising. But in America, where the genius and maxims of war are extremely different, passive fortitude is the quality in highest estimation. Accordingly, it is early the study of the Americans to acquire sentiments and habits, which will enable them to behave like men, when their resolution shall be put to the proof. As the youth of other nations exercise themselves in seats of activity and force, those of America vie with one another in exhibitions of their patience under sufferings. They harden their nerves by those voluntary trials, and gradually accustom themselves to endure the sharpest pain without complaining. A boy and girl will bind their naked arms together, and place a burning coal between them, in order to try who first discovers such impatience, as to shake it off [*y*]. All the trials, customary in America, when a youth is admitted into the class of warriors, or when a warrior is promoted to the dignity of captain or chief, are accommodated to this idea of manliness. They are not displays of valour, but of patience; they are not exhibitions of their ability to offend, but of their capacity to suffer. Among the tribes on the banks of the Orinoco, if a warrior aspires to the rank of captain, his probation begins with a long fast, more rigid than any ever observed by the most abstemious hermit. At the close of this, the chiefs assemble, each gives him three lashes with a large whip, applied so vigorously, that his body is almost flayed, and if he betrays the least symptom of impatience or even sen-

[*y*] Charlev. Hist. N. Fr. iii. 307.

sibility, he is disgraced for ever, and rejected as unworthy of the honour to which he aspires. After some interval, the constancy of the candidate is proved by a more excruciating trial. He is laid in a hammoc with his hands bound fast, and an innumerable multitude of venomous ants, whose bite occasions exquisite pain, and produces a violent inflammation, are thrown upon him. The judges of his merit stand around the hammoc, and, while these cruel insects fasten upon the most sensible parts of his body, a sigh, a groan, an involuntary motion expressive of what he suffers, would exclude him for ever from the rank of captain. Even after this evidence of his fortitude, it is not deemed to be completely ascertained, but must stand another test more dreadful than any he has hitherto undergone. He is again suspended in his hammoc, and covered with leaves of the palmetto. A fire of stinking herbs is kindled underneath, so as he may feel its heat, and be involved in its smoke. Though scorched and almost suffocated, he must continue to endure with the same patient insensibility. Many perish in this rude essay of their firmness and courage, but such as go through it with applause, receive the ensigns of their new dignity with much solemnity, and are ever after regarded as leaders of approved resolution, whose behaviour, in the most trying situations, will do honour to their country [z]. In North America, the previous trial of a warrior is neither so formal, nor so severe. Though even there, before a youth is permitted to bear arms, his patience and fortitude are proved by blows, by fire, and by insults, more intolerable to a haughty spirit than both [a].

The amazing steadiness with which the Americans endure the most exquisite torments, has induced some authors to suppose that, from the peculiar

[z] Gumilla, ii. 286, &c. Biet. 376, &c.

[a] Charlev. Hist. N. Fr. iii. 219.

feebleness of their frame, their sensibility is not so acute as that of other people ; as women, and persons of a relaxed habit, are observed to be less affected with pain than robust men, whose nerves are more firmly braced. But the constitution of the Americans is not so different, in its texture, from that of the rest of the human species, as to account for this diversity in their behaviour. It flows from a principle of honour, instilled early and cultivated with such care, as to inspire man in his rudest state with an heroic magnanimity, to which philosophy hath endeavoured, in vain, to form him, when more highly improved and polished. This invincible constancy he has been taught to consider as the chief distinction of a man, and the highest attainment of a warrior. The ideas which influenced his conduct, and the passions which take possession of his heart, are few. They operate of course with more decisive effect, than when the mind is crowded with a multiplicity of objects, or distracted by the variety of its pursuits ; and when every motive that acts with any force in forming the sentiments of a savage, prompts him to suffer with dignity, he will bear what might seem to be impossible for human patience to sustain. But wherever the fortitude of the Americans is not roused to exertion by their ideas of honour, their feelings of pain are the same with those of the rest of mankind [b]. Nor is that patience under sufferings, for which the Americans have been so justly celebrated, an universal attainment. The constancy of many of the victims is overcome by the agonies of torture. Their weakness and lamentations complete the triumph of their enemies, and reflect disgrace upon their own country [c].

The perpetual hostilities carried on among the American tribes are productive of very fatal effects.

[b] See NOTE LXXIV. [c] Charlev. Hist. N. Fr. iii. 248, 385. De la Potherie, iii. 48.

Even in seasons of public tranquillity, their imperfect industry does not supply them with any superfluous store of provisions; but when the irruption of an enemy desolates their cultivated lands, or disturbs them in their hunting excursions, such a calamity reduces a community, naturally unprovident and destitute of resources, to extreme want. All the people of the district that is invaded are frequently forced to take refuge in woods or mountains, which can afford them little subsistence, and where many of them perish. Notwithstanding their excessive caution in conducting their military operations, and the solicitude of every leader to preserve the lives of his followers, as the rude tribes in America seldom enjoy any interval of peace, the loss of men among them is considerable in proportion to the degree of population. Thus famine and the sword combine in thinning their numbers. All their communities are feeble, and nothing now remains of several nations, which were once considerable, but the name [*d*].

Sensible of this continual decay, there are tribes which endeavour to recruit their national force when exhausted, by adopting prisoners taken in war, and by this expedient prevent their total extinction. The practice, however, is not universally received. Resentment operates more powerfully among savages, than considerations of policy. Far the greater part of their captives was anciently sacrificed to their vengeance, and it is only since their numbers began to decline fast, that they have generally adopted milder maxims. But such as they do naturalize, renounce for ever their native tribe, and assume the manners as well as passions of the people by whom they are adopted [*e*], so entirely, that they often join them in expeditions against their own countrymen. Such a

[*d*] Charlev. Hist. N. Fr. iii. 202, 203, 429. Gumilla, ii. 227, &c. [*e*] Charlev. Hist. N. Fr. iii. 245, &c. Laftau, ii. 308.

sudden transition, and so repugnant to one of the most powerful instinct, implanted by nature, would be deemed strange among many people ; but, among the members of small communities, where national enmity is violent and deep rooted, it has the appearance of being still more unaccountable. It seems, however, to result naturally from the principles upon which war is carried on in America. When nations aim at exterminating their enemies, no exchange of prisoners can ever take place. From the moment one is made a prisoner, his country and his friends consider him as dead [*f*]. He has incurred indelible disgrace by suffering himself to be surprised or to be taken by an enemy ; and were he to return home, after such a stain upon his honour, his nearest relations would not receive or even acknowledge that they knew him [*g*]. Some tribes were still more rigid, and if a prisoner returned, the infamy which he had brought on his country was expiated, by putting him instantly to death [*h*]. As the unfortunate captive is thus an outcast from his own country, and the ties which bound him to it are irreparably broken, he feels less reluctance in forming a new connection with people, who, as an evidence of their friendly sentiments, not only deliver him from a cruel death, but offer to admit him to all the rights of a fellow-citizen. The perfect similarity of manners among savage nations facilitates and completes the union, and reduces a captive to transfer not only his allegiance, but his affection, to the community into the bosom of which he is received.

But though war be the chief occupation of men in their rude state, and to excel in it their highest distinction and pride, their inferiority is always manifest when they engage in competition with polished nations. Destitute of that foresight which discerns and

[*f*] See NOTE LXXV.

[*g*] Lahont. ii. 185, 186.

[*h*] Herrera, dec. 3. lib. iv. c. 16. p. 173.

provides for remote events, strangers to the union and mutual confidence requisite in forming any extensive plan of operations, and incapable of the subordination no less requisite in carrying such plans into execution, savage nations may astonish a disciplined enemy by their valour, but seldom prove formidable to him by their conduct ; and whenever the contest is of long continuance, must yield to superior art [*i*]. The empires of Peru and Mexico, though their progress in civilization, when measured by the European and Asiatic standards, was inconsiderable, acquired such an ascendancy over the rude tribes around them, that they subjected most of them with great facility to their power. When the people of Europe overran the various provinces of America, this superiority was still more conspicuous. Neither the courage nor number of the natives could repel a handful of invaders. The alienation and enmity, prevalent among barbarians, prevented them from uniting in any common scheme of defence, and while each tribe fought separately, all were subdued.

VI. The arts of rude nations unacquainted with the use of metals, hardly merit any attention on their own account, but are worthy of some notice, as far as they serve to display the genius and manners of man in this stage of his progress. The first distress a savage must feel, will arise from the manner in which his body is affected, by the heat, or cold, or moisture, of the climate under which he lives ; and his first care will be to provide some covering for his own defence. In the warmer and more mild climates of America, none of the rude tribes were clothed. To most of them Nature had not even suggested any idea of impropriety in being altogether uncovered [*k*]. As under a mild climate there was

[*i*] See NOTE LXXVI. [*k*] Lery Navigat. ap. de Bry, iii. p. 164. Life of Columbus, c. 24. Venegas Hist. of California. p. 70.

little need of any defence from the injuries of the air, and their extreme indolence shunned every species of labour to which it was not urged by absolute necessity, all the inhabitants of the isles, and a considerable part of the people of the continent, remained in this state of naked simplicity. Others were satisfied with some slight covering, such as decency required. But though naked, they were not unadorned. They dressed their hair in many different forms. They fastened bits of gold, or shells, or shining stones, in their ears, their noses, and cheeks [1]. They stained their skins with a great variety of figures; and they spent much time, and submitted to great pain, in ornamenting their persons in this fantastic manner. Vanity, however, which finds endless occupation for ingenuity and invention, in nations where dress has become a complex and intricate art, is circumscribed within so narrow bounds, and confined to so few articles among naked savages, that they are not satisfied with those simple decorations, and have a wonderful propensity to alter the natural form of their bodies, in order to render it (as they imagine) more perfect and beautiful. This practice was universal among the rudest of the American tribes. Their operations for that purpose begin as soon as an infant is born. By compressing the bones of the skull, while still soft and flexible, some flatten the crown of their heads; some squeeze them into the shape of a cone; others mould them as much as possible into a square figure [m]; and they often endanger the lives of their posterity by their violent and absurd efforts to derange the plan of Nature, or to improve upon her designs. But in all their attempts either to adorn

[1] Lery ap. de Bry, iii. 165. Lettr. Edif. 20, 223.

[m] Oviedo, Hist. lib. iii. c. 5. Ulloa, i. 329. Voyage de Labat, ii. 72. Charlevoix, iii. 323. Gumilla, i. 197, &c. Acugna, Relat. de la Riv. des Amaz. ii. 83. Lawson's Voyage to Carolina, p. 33.



or to new-model their persons, it seems to have been less the object of the Americans to please, or to appear beautiful, than to give an air of dignity and terror to their aspect. Their attention to dress had more reference to war than to gallantry. The difference in rank and estimation between the two sexes was so great, as seems to have extinguished, in some measure, their solicitude to appear mutually amiable. The man deemed it beneath him to adorn his person, for the sake of one on whom he was accustomed to look down as a slave. It was when the warrior had in view to enter the council of his nation, or to take the field against its enemies, that he assumed his choicest ornaments, and decked his person with the nicest care [*n*]. The decorations of the women were few and simple; whatever was precious or splendid was reserved for the men. In several tribes the women were obliged to spend a considerable part of their time every day in adorning and painting their husbands, and could bestow little attention upon ornamenting themselves. Among a race of men so haughty as to despise, or so cold as to neglect them, the women naturally became careless and slovenly, the love of finery and show, which had been deemed their favourite passion, was confined chiefly to the other sex [*o*]. To deck his person was the distinction of a warrior, as well as one of his most serious occupations [*p*]. In one part of their dress, which, at first sight, appears the most singular and capricious, the Americans have discovered considerable sagacity in providing against the chief inconveniencies of their climate, which is often sultry

[*n*] Wafer's Voyage, p. 142. Lery ap. de Bry, iii. 167. Charlev. Hist. N. Fran. iii. 216, 222. [*o*] Charlev. Hist. de la Nouv. France, iii. 278, 327. Lafitau, ii. 53. Kalm's Voyage, iii. 273. Lery ap. de Bry, iii. 169, 170. Purch. Pilgr. iv. 1287. Ribas, Hist. de los Triumph. &c. 472. [*p*] See NOTE LXXVII.

and moist to excess. All the different tribes, which remain unclothed, are accustomed to anoint and rub their bodies with the grease of animals, with viscous gums, and with oils of different kinds. By this they check that profuse perspiration, which, in the torrid zone, wastes the vigour of the frame, and abridges the period of human life. By this too, they provide a defence against the extreme moisture during the rainy season [*q*]. They likewise, at certain seasons, temper paint of different colours with those unctuous substances, and bedaub themselves plentifully with that composition. Sheathed with this impenetrable varnish, their skins are not only protected from the penetrating heat of the sun, but, as all the innumerable tribes of insects have an antipathy to the smell or taste of that mixture, they are delivered from their teasing persecution, which amidst forests and marshes, especially in the warmer regions, would have been altogether intolerable in a state of perfect nakedness [*r*].

The next object to dress that will engage the attention of a savage, is to prepare some habitation which may afford him shelter by day, and a retreat at night. Whatever is connected with his ideas of personal dignity, whatever bears any reference to his military character, the savage warrior deems an object of importance. Whatever relates only to peaceable and inactive life, he views with indifference. Hence, though finically attentive to dress, he is little solicitous about the elegance or disposition of his habitation. Savage nations, far from that state of improvement, in which the mode of living is considered as a mark of distinction, and unacquainted with those wants which require a variety of accommodation, regulate the construction of their houses according to their limited ideas of necessity. Some of

[*q*] See NOTE LXXVIII. [*r*] Labat, ii. 73. Gomilla, i. 190, 202. Bancroft, Nat. Hist. of Guiana, 81, 280.

the American tribes were so extremely rude, and had advanced so little beyond the primeval simplicity of Nature, that they had no houses at all. During the day, they take shelter from the scorching rays of the sun under thick trees ; at night they form a shade with their branches and leaves [*s*]. In the rainy season they retire into coves, formed by the hand of Nature, or hollowed out by their own industry [*t*]. Others, who have no fixed abode, and roam through the forest in quest of game, sojourn in temporary huts, which they erect with little labour, and abandon without any concern. The inhabitants of those vast plains, which are deluged by the overflowing of rivers during the heavy rains that fall periodically between the tropics, raise houses upon piles fastened in the ground, or place them among the bows of trees, and are thus safe amidst that wide-extended inundation which surrounds them [*u*]. Such were the first essays of the rudest Americans towards providing themselves with habitations. But even among tribes which are more improved, and whose residence is become altogether fixed, the structure of their houses is extremely mean and simple. They are wretched huts, sometimes of an oblong and sometimes of a circular form, intended merely with shelter, with no view to elegance, and little attention to conveniency. The doors are so low, that it is necessary to bend or to creep on the hands and feet in order to enter them. They are without windows, and have a large hole in the middle of the roof, to convey out the smoke. To follow travellers in other minute circumstances of their description, is not only beneath the dignity

[*s*] See NOTE LXXIX. [*t*] Lettres Edif. v. 273. Venegas, Hist. of Calif. i. 76. Lozano, Descrip. del Gran Chaco, p. 55. Lettres Edif. ii. 176. Gumilla, i. 383. Bancroft, Nat. Hist. of Guiana, 277. [*u*] Gumilla, i. 225. Herrera, dec. i. lib. ix. c. 6. Oviedo Sommar, p. 53, C.

of history, but would be foreign to the object of my researches. One circumstance merits attention, as it is singular, and illustrates the character of the people. Some of their houses are so large as to contain accomodation for fourscore or a hundred persons. These are built for the reception of different families, which dwell together under the same roof [*x*], and often around a common fire, without separate apartments, or any kind of screen or partition between the spaces which they respectively occupy. As soon as men have acquired distinct ideas of property; or when they are so much attached to their females, as to watch them with care and jealousy; families of course divide and settle in separate houses, where they can secure and guard whatever they wish to preserve. This singular mode of habitation among several people of America may therefore be considered not only as the effect of their imperfect notions concerning property, but as a proof of inattention and indifference towards their women. If they had not been accustomed to perfect equality, such an arrangement could not have taken place. If their sensibility had not been apt to have taken alarm, they would not have trusted the virtue of their women amidst the temptations and opportunities of such a primiscuous intercourse. At the same time, the perpetual concord which reigns in habitations where so many families are crowded together, is surprising, and affords a striking evidence that they must be people of either a very gentle, or of a very phlegmatic temper, who, in such a situation, are unacquainted with animosity, brawling, and discord [*y*].

After making some provision for his dress and habi-

[*x*] See NOTE LXXX. [*y*] Journ. de Grillet & Bechamel dans la Goyane, p. 65. Lantau, Mœurs, ii. 4. Torquem. Monarq. i. 247. Journal, Hist. de Joutal, 217. Lery, Hist. Brasil, ap. de Bry, iii. 238. Lozano, Descr. del Gran Chaco, 67.

tation, a savage will perceive the necessity of preparing proper arms with which to assault or repel an enemy. This, accordingly, has early exercised the ingenuity and invention of all rude nations. The first offensive weapons were doubtless such as chance presented, and the first efforts of art to improve upon these, were extremely awkward and simple. Clubs made of some heavy wood, stakes hardened in the fire, lances whose heads were armed with flint or the bones of some animal, are weapons known to the rudest nations. All these, however, were of use only in close encounter. But men wished to annoy their enemies while at a distance, and the bow and arrow is the most early invention for this purpose. This weapon is in the hands of people, whose advances in improvement are extremely inconsiderable, and is familiar to the inhabitants of every quarter of the globe. It is remarkable, however, that some tribes in America were so destitute of art and ingenuity, that they had not attained to the discovery of this simple invention [z], and seem to have been unacquainted with the use of any missive weapon. The sling, though in its construction not more complex than the bow, and among many nations of equal antiquity, was little known to the people of North America [a], or the islands, but appears to have been used by a few tribes in the southern continent [b]. The people, in some provinces of Chili, and those of Patagonia, towards the southern extremity of America, use a weapon peculiar to themselves. They fasten stones, about the size of a fist, to each end of a leather thong, of eight feet in length, and swinging these round their heads, throw them with such dexterity, that they seldom miss the object at which they aim [c].

[z] Piedrahita, Conq. del Nuevo Reyno, ix. 12. [a] Naufr. de Alv. Nun Cabeça de vaca, c. x. p. 12. [b] Piedrah. p. 16. See NOTE LXXXI. [c] Ovalle's Relation of Chili. Church. Collect. iii. 82. Falkner's Descript. of Patagon. p. 130.

Among people who had hardly any occupation but war or hunting, the chief exertions of their invention [*d*], as well as industry, were naturally directed towards these objects. With respect to every thing else, their wants and desires were so limited, that their invention was not upon the stretch. As their food and habitations are perfectly simple, their domestic utensils are few and rude. Some of the southern tribes had discovered the art of forming vessels of earthen ware, and baking them in the sun, so as they could endure the fire. In North America, they hollowed a piece of hard wood into the form of a kettle, and filling it with water, brought it to boil, by putting red hot stones into it [*e*]. These vessels they used in preparing part of their provisions ; and this may be considered as a step towards refinement and luxury, for men in their rudest state were not acquainted with any method of dressing their victuals, but by roasting them on the fire ; and among several tribes in America, this is the only species of cookery yet known [*f*]. But the master-piece of art, among the savages of America, is the construction of their canoes. An Eskimaux, shut up in his boat of whalebone, covered with the skins of seals, can brave that stormy ocean, on which the barrenness of his country compels him to depend for the chief part of his subsistence [*g*]. The people of Canada venture upon their rivers and lakes, in boats made of the bark of trees, and so light that two men can carry them, wherever shallows or cataracts obstruct the navigation [*h*]. In these frail vessels they undertake and accomplish long voyages [*i*]. The inhabitants of the isles and of the southern continent form their canoes by hollowing the trunk of a large tree, with infinite labour, and though in appearance

[*d*] See NOTE LXXXII. [*e*] Charlev. Hist. N. Fr. iii. 332. [*f*] See NOTE LXXXIII. [*g*] Ellis, Voy. 133. [*h*] See NOTE LXXXIV. [*i*] Lafitau, Mœurs, &c. ii. 213.

they are extremely awkward and unweildy, they paddle and steer them with such dexterity, that Europeans, well acquainted with all the improvements in the science of navigation, have been astonished at the rapidity of their motion, and the quickness of their evolutions. Their *pirogues*, or war-boats, are so large as to carry forty or fifty men ; their canoes employed in fishing and in short voyages are less capacious [*k*]. The form, as well as materials of all these various kinds of vessels, is well adapted to the service for which they are destined ; and the more minutely they are examined, the mechanism of their structure, as well as neatness of their fabric, will appear the more surprising.

But, in every attempt towards industry among the Americans, one striking quality in their character is conspicuous. They apply to work without ardour, carry it on with little activity, and, like children, are easily diverted from it. Even in operations which seem the most interesting, and where the most powerful motives urge them to vigorous exertions, they labour with a languid listlessness. Their work advances under their hand with such slowness, that an eye-witness compares it to the imperceptible progress of vegetation [*l*]. They will spend so many years in forming a canoe, that it often begins to rot with age before they finish it. They will suffer one part of a roof to decay and perish, before they complete the other [*m*]. The slightest manual operation consumes an amazing length of time, and what in polished nations would hardly be an effort of industry, is among savages an arduous undertaking. This slowness of the Americans in executing works of every kind may be imputed to various causes. Among savages, who do not depend for subsistence upon the efforts of regular industry,

[*k*] Labat, Voyages, li. 91, &c. 131.

[*l*] Gumilla, ii. 297.

[*m*] Berde, Relat. des Caraibes, p. 22.

time is of so little importance, that they set no value upon it; and provided they can finish a design, they never regard how long they are employed about it. The tools which they employ are so awkward and defective, that every work in which they engage must necessarily be tedious. The hand of the most industrious and skilful artist, were it furnished with no better instrument than a stone hatchet, a shell, or the bone of some animal, would find it difficult to perfect the most simple work. It is by length of labour, that he must endeavour to supply his defect of power. But above all, the cold phlegmatic temper peculiar to the Americans renders their operations languid. It is almost impossible to rouse them from that habitual indolence in which they are sunk; and, unless when engaged in war or hunting, they seem incapable of exerting any vigorous effort. Their ardour of application is not so great as to call forth that inventive spirit which suggests expedients for facilitating and bridging labour. They will return to a task day after day, but all their methods of executing it are tedious and operose [n]. Even since the Europeans have communicated to them the knowledge of their instruments, and taught them to imitate their arts, the peculiar genius of the Americans is conspicuous in every attempt they make. They may be patient and assiduous in labour, they can copy with a serene and minute accuracy, but discover little invention, and no talents for dispatch. In spite of instruction and example, the spirit of the race predominates; their motions are naturally tardy, and it is in vain to urge them to quicken their pace. Among the Spaniards in America, *the work of an Indian* is a phrase by which they describe any thing, in the execution of which an immense time has been employed, and much labour wasted [o].

VII. No circumstance respecting rude nations has

[n] See NOTE LXXXV.

[o] Voyages de Ulloa, i. 335. Lettr. Edif. &c. 15, 348.



been the object of greater curiosity than their religious tenets and rites; and none, perhaps, has been so imperfectly understood, or represented with so little fidelity. Priests and missionaries are the persons who have had the best opportunities of carrying on this inquiry, among the most uncivilized of the American tribes. Their minds, engrossed by the doctrines of their own religion, and habituated to its institutions, are apt to discover something which resembles those objects of their veneration, in the opinions and rites of every people. Whatever they contemplate, they view through one medium, and draw and accomodate it to their own system. They study to reconcile the institutions, which fall under their observation, to their own creed, not to explain them according to the rude notions of the people themselves. They ascribe to them ideas which they are incapable of forming, and suppose them to be acquainted with principles and facts, which it is impossible that they should know. Hence some missionaries have been induced to believe, that even among the most barbarous nations in America, they had discovered traces, no less distinct than amazing, of their acquaintance with the sublime mysteries and peculiar institutions of Christianity. From their own interpretations of certain expressions and ceremonies, they have concluded that these people had some knowledge of the doctrine of the Trinity, of the incarnation of the Son of God, of his expiatory sacrifice, of the virtue of the cross, and of the efficacy of the sacraments [*p*]. In such unintelligent and credulous guides, we can place little confidence.

But, even when we make our choice of conductors, with the greatest care, we must not follow them with implicit faith. An inquiry into the religious notions of rude nations is involved in peculiar intricacies, and we must often pause in order to

[*p*] Venegas, i. 88. 92. Torquemada, ii. 445. Garcia, Crigen. 122. Herrera, dec. 4. lib. ix. c. 7. dec. 5. lib. iv. c. 7.

separate the facts which our informers relate, from the reasonings with which they are accompanied, or the theories which they build upon them. Several pious writers, more attentive to the importance of the subject than to the condition of the people whose sentiments they were endeavouring to discover, have bestowed much unprofitable labour in researches of this nature [q].

There are two fundamental doctrines upon which the whole system of religion, as far as it can be discovered by the light of nature, is established. The one respects the being of a God, the other the immortality of the soul. To discover the ideas of the uncultivated nations under our review with regard to those important points, is not only an object of curiosity, but may afford instruction. To these two articles I shall confine my researches, leaving subordinate opinions, and the detail of local superstitions, to more minute inquirers. Whoever has had any opportunity of examining into the religious opinions of persons in the inferior ranks of life, even in the most enlightened and civilized nations, will find that their system of belief is derived from instruction, not discovered by inquiry. That numerous part of the human species, whose lot is labour, whose principal and almost sole occupation is to secure subsistence, views the arrangement and operations of Nature with little reflection, and has neither leisure nor capacity for entering into that path of refined and intricate speculation which conducts to the knowledge of the principals of natural religion. In the early and most rude periods of savage life, such disquisitions are altogether unknown. When the intellectual powers are just beginning to unfold, and their first feeble exertions are directed towards a few objects of primary necessity and use; when the faculties of the mind are so limited, as not to have formed abstract or

[q] See NOTE LXXXVI.

general ideas ; when language is so barren, as to be destitute of names to distinguish any thing that is not perceived by some of the senses ; it is preposterous to expect that man should be capable of tracing with accuracy the relation between cause and effect ; or to suppose that he should rise from the contemplation of the one to the knowledge of the other, and form just conceptions of a Deity, as the Creator and Governor of the universe. The idea of creation is so familiar wherever the mind is enlarged by science, and illuminated with revelation, that we seldom reflect how profound and abstruse this idea is, or consider what progress man must have made in observation and research, before he could arrive at any knowledge of this elementary principle in religion. Accordingly, several tribes have been discovered in America, which have no idea whatever of a Supreme Being, and no rites of religious worship. Inattentive to that magnificent spectacle of beauty and order presented to their view, unaccustomed to reflect either upon what they themselves are, or to inquire who is the author of their existence, men, in their savage state, pass their days like the animals round them, without knowledge or veneration of any superior power. Some rude tribes have not in their language any name for the Deity, nor have the most accurate observers been able to discover any practice or institution which seemed to imply that they recognized his authority, or were solicitous to obtain his favour [*r*]. It is however only among

[*r*] Biet. 539. Lery ap. de Bry, iii. 221. Nieuhoff, Church-Coll. ii. 132. Lettr. Edif. 2. 177. Id. 12, 13. Venegas, l. 87. Lozano, Descript. del. Gran Chaco, 59. Fernand. Mission. de Chiquit. 39. Gumilla, ii. 156. Rochefort, Hist. des Antilles, p. 468. Margrave, Hist. in Append. de Chiliensibus. 286. Ulloa Notic. Americ. 335, &c. Barrere, 218, 219. Harcourt, Voy. to Guiana. Purch. Pilgr. iv. p. 1273. Account of Brasil, by a Portuguese. Ibid. p. 1289. Jones' Journal, p. 59. See NOTE LXXXVII.

men in the most uncultivated state of nature, and while their intellectual faculties are so feeble and limited as hardly to elevate them above the irrational creation, that we discover this total insensibility to the impressions of any invisible power.

But the human mind, formed for religion, soon opens to the reception of ideas, which are destined, when corrected and refined, to be the great source of consolation amidst the calamities of life. Among some of the American tribes, still in the infancy of improvement, we discern apprehensions of some invisible and powerful beings. These apprehensions are originally indistinct and perplexed, and seem to be suggested rather by the dread of impending evils, than to flow from gratitude for blessings received. While nature holds on her course with uniform and undisturbed regularity, men enjoy the benefits resulting from it, without inquiring concerning its cause. But every deviation from this regular course rouses and astonishes them. When they behold events to which they are not accustomed, they search for the reasons of them with eager curiosity. Their understanding is unable to penetrate into these; but imagination, a more forward and ardent faculty of the mind, decides without hesitation. It ascribes the extraordinary occurrences in nature to the influence of invisible beings, and supposes that the thunder, the hurricane, and the earthquake, are effects of their interposition. Some such confused notion of spiritual or invisible power, superintending over those natural calamities which frequently desolate the earth, and terrify its inhabitants, may be traced among many rude nations [s]. But besides this, the disasters and dangers of savage life are so many, and men often find themselves in situations so formidable, that the mind, sensible of its own weakness, has no resource but in the guidance and protection

[s] See NOTE LXXXVIII.

of wisdom and power superior to what is human. Dejected with calamities which oppress him, and exposed to dangers which he cannot repel, the savage no longer relies upon himself; he feels his own impotence, and sees no prospect of being extricated, but by the interposition of some unseen arm. Hence, in all unenlightened nations, the first rites or practices which bear any resemblance to acts of religion, have it for their object to avert evils which men suffer or dread. The *Manitous* or *Okhis* of the North Americans wore amulets or charms, which they imagined to be of such virtue, as to preserve the persons who reposed confidence in them from every disastrous event, or they were considered as tutelary spirits, whose aid they might implore in circumstances of distress [1]. The *Cemis* of the islanders were reputed by them to be the authors of every calamity that afflicts the human race; they were represented under the most frightful forms, and religious homage was paid to them with no other view than to appease these furious deities [2]. Even among those tribes whose religious system was more enlarged, and who had formed some conception of benevolent beings, which delighted in conferring benefits, as well as of malicious powers prone to inflict evil; superstition still appears as the offspring of fear, and all its efforts were employed to avert calamities. They were persuaded that their good deities, prompted by the beneficence of their nature, would bestow every blessing in their power, without solicitation or acknowledgment; and their only anxiety was to sooth and deprecate the wrath of the powers whom they regarded as the enemies of mankind [3].

[1] Charlev. Hist. N. Fr. iii. 313, &c. Creuxii, Hist. Canad. p. 82, &c. [2] Oviedo, lb. iii. c. 1. p. 111. P. Martyr, decad. p. 102, &c. [3] Tetre, ii. 365. Borde, p. 14. State of Virginia, by a Native, book iii. p. 32, 33. Dumont, i. 165. Bancroft, Nat. Hist. of Guiana, 309.

Such were the imperfect conceptions of the greater part of the Americans with respect to the interpositions of invisible agents, and such, almost universally, was the mean and illiberal object of their superstitions. Were we to trace back the ideas of other nations to that rude state in which history first presents them to our view, we should discover a surprising resemblance in their tenets and practices; and should be convinced, that, in similar circumstances, the faculties of the human mind hold nearly the same course in their progress, and arrive at almost the same conclusions. The impressions of fear are conspicuous in all the systems of superstition formed in this situation. The most exalted notions of men rise no higher than to a perplexed apprehension of certain beings, whose power, though supernatural, is limited as well as partial.

But, among other tribes, which have been longer civilized, or have made greater progress in improvement, we discern some feeble pointing towards more just and adequate conceptions of the power that presides in nature. They seem to perceive that there must be some universal cause to whom all things are indebted for their being. If we may judge by some of their expressions, they appear to acknowledge a divine power to be the maker of the world, and the disposer of all events. They denominate him the *Great Spirit* [*x*]. But these ideas are faint and confused, and when they attempt to explain them, it is manifest, that among them the word *spirit* has a meaning very different from that in which we employ it, and that they have no conception of any deity but what is corporeal. They believe their gods to be of the human form, though of a nature more excellent than man, and retail such wild incoherent fables concerning their functions and operations, as

[*x*] Charlev. N. Fr. iii. 343. Sagard, Voy. du Pays des Hurons, 226.

are altogether unworthy of a place in history. Even among these tribes, there is no established form of public worship; there are no temples erected in honour of their deities; and no ministers peculiarly consecrated to their service. They have the knowledge, however, of several superstitious ceremonies and practices handed down to them by tradition; and to these they have recourse with a childish credulity, when roused by any emergence from their usual insensibility, and excited to acknowledge the power, and to emlore the protection of superior beings [y].

The tribe of the Natchez and the people of Bogota had advanced beyond the other uncultivated nations of America in their ideas of religion, as well as in their political institutions; and it is no less difficult to explain the cause of this distinction than of that which we have already considered. The Sun was the chief object of religious worship among the Natchez. In their temples, which were constructed with some magnificence, and decorated with various ornaments, according to their mode of architecture, they preserved a perpetual fire, as the purest emblem of their divinity. Ministers were appointed to watch and feed this sacred flame. The first function of the great chief of the nation, every morning, was an act of obeisance to the Sun; and festivals returned at stated seasons, which were celebrated by the whole community with solemn but unbloody rites [z]. This is the most refined species of superstition known in America, and, perhaps, one of the most natural as well as most seducing. The Sun is the apparent source of the joy, fertility, and life diffused through nature; and while the human mind, in its early essays towards inquiry, contemplates and admires his universal and animating energy, its admiration

[y] Charlev. N. Fr. iii. 345. Colden, i. 17. [z] Dumont, i. 158, &c. Charlev. N. Fr. iii. 417, &c. 429. Lañtau, i. 167.

is apt to stop short at what is visible, without reaching to the unseen cause; and pays that adoration to the most glorious and beneficial work of God, which is due only to him who formed it. As fire is the purest and most active of the elements, and in some of its qualities and effects resembles the Sun, it was, not improperly, chosen to be the emblem of his powerful operation. The ancient Persians, a people far superior, in every respect, to that rude tribe whose rites I am describing, founded their religious system on similar principles, and established a form of public worship, less gross and exceptionable than that of any people destitute of guidance from revelation. This surprising coincidence in sentiment between two nations, in such different states of improvement, is one of the many singular and unaccountable circumstances which occur in the history of human affairs.

Among the people of Bogota, the Sun and Moon were, likewise, the chief objects of veneration. Their system of religion was more regular and complete, though less pure, than that of the Natchez. They had temples, altars, priests, sacrifices, and that long train of ceremonies, which superstition introduces wherever she has fully established her dominion over the minds of men. But the rites of their worship were cruel and bloody. They offered human victims to their deities, and many of their practices nearly resembled the barbarous institutions of the Mexicans, the genius of which we shall have an opportunity of considering more attentively in its proper place [*a*].

With respect to the other great doctrine of religion, concerning the immortality of the soul, the sentiments of the Americans were more united: the human mind, even when least improved and invigorated by culture, shrinks from the thoughts of anni-

[*a*] Piedrahita, *Conq. del N. Reyno*, p. 17. Herrera, *dec. 6. lib. v. c. 6.*



hilation, and looks forward with hope and expectation to a state of future existence. This sentiment, resulting from a secret consciousness of its own dignity, from an instinctive longing after immortality, is universal, and may be deemed natural. Upon this, are founded the most exalted hopes of man in his highest state of improvement ; nor has Nature withheld from him this soothing consolation, in the most early and rude period of his progress. We can trace this opinion from one extremity of America to the other : in some regions more faint and obscure, in others more perfectly developed, but no where unknown. The most uncivilized of its savage tribes do not apprehend death as the extinction of being. All entertain hopes of a future and more happy state, where they shall be for ever exempt from the calamities which imbitter human life in its present condition. This future state they conceive to be a delightful country, blessed with perpetual spring, whose forests abound with game, whose rivers swarm with fish, where famine is never felt, and uninterrupted plenty shall be enjoyed without labour or toil. But as men, in forming their first imperfect ideas concerning the invisible world, suppose that there they shall continue to feel the same desires, and to be engaged in the same occupations, as in the present world ; they naturally ascribe eminence and distinction, in that state, to the same qualities and talents which are here the object of their esteem. The Americans, accordingly, allotted the highest place, in their country of spirits, to the skillful hunter, to the adventurous and successful warrior, and to such as had tortured the greatest number of captives and devoured their flesh [b]. These notions were so prevalent, that they gave rise to an universal custom, which is, at once, the strongest

[17] Lery ap. de Bry, iii. 222. Charlev. N. Fr. iii. 371, &c. D. La Perrière, ii. 15, &c. iii. 5.

evidence that the Americans believe in a future state, and the best illustration of what they expect there. As they imagine, that departed spirits begin their career anew in the world whither they are gone, that their friends may not enter upon it defenceless and unprovided, they bury together with the bodies of the dead their bow, their arrows, and other weapons used in hunting or war; they deposit in their tombs the skins or stuffs of which they make garments, Indian corn, manioc, venison, domestic utensils, and whatever is reckoned among the necessities in their simple mode of life [c]. In some provinces, upon the decease of a cazique or chief, a certain number of his wives, of his favourites, and of his slaves, were put to death, and interred together with him, that he might appear with the same dignity in his future station, and be waited upon by the same attendants [d]. This persuasion is so deep rooted, that many of the deceased person's retainers offer themselves as voluntary victims, and court the privilege of accompanying their departed master, as an high distinction. It has been found difficult, on some occasions, to set bounds to this enthusiasm of affectionate duty, and to reduce the train of a favourite leader to such a number as the tribe could afford to spare [e].

Among the Americans, as well as other uncivilized nations, many of the rites and observances which bear some resemblance to acts of religion, have no connection with devotion, but proceed from a fond desire of prying into futurity. The human mind is

[c] *Chronica de Cieca de Leon*, c. 28. Sagard, 288. Creux. *Hist. Canad.* p. 91. Rochefort, *Hist. des Antilles*, 568. Biet. 391. De la Potherie, ii. 44. iii. 8. Blanco, *Convers. de Piritu*, p. 35. [d] Dumont *Louisiane*, i. 208, &c. Oviedo, lib. v. c. 3. Gomara, *Hist. Gen.* c. 28. P. Mart. *decad.* 304. Charlev. N. Fr. iii. 421. Herrera, *dec.* 1. lib. iii. c. 3. P. Melchior Hernandez, *Memor. de Chiriqui*. Coll. Orig. Papers. i. *Chron. de Cieca de Leon*, c. 33. [e] See NOTE LXXXIX.

most apt to feel, and to discover this vain curiosity, when its own powers are most feeble and uninformed. Astonished with occurrences, of which it is unable to comprehend the cause, it naturally fancies that there is something mysterious and wonderful in their origin. Alarmed at events of which it cannot discern the issue or the consequences, it has recourse to other means of discovering them, than the exercise of its own sagacity. Wherever superstition is so established as to form a regular system, this desire of penetrating into the secrets of futurity is connected with it. Divination becomes a religious act. Priests, as the ministers of Heaven, pretend to deliver its oracles to men. They are the only soothsayers, augurs, and magicians, who profess the sacred and important art of disclosing what is hid from other eyes.

But, among rude nations, who pay no veneration to any superintending power, and who have no established rites or ministers of religion, their curiosity to discover what is future and unknown is cherished by a different principle, and derives strength from another alliance. As the diseases of men, in the savage state, are (as has been already observed) like those of the animal creation, few but extremely violent, their impatience under what they suffer, and solicitude for the recovery of health, soon inspired them with extraordinary reverence for such as pretended to understand the nature of their maladies, and to be possessed of knowledge sufficient to preserve or deliver them from their sudden and fatal effects. These ignorant pretenders, however, were such utter strangers to the structure of the human frame, as to be equally unacquainted with the causes of its disorders, and the manner in which they will terminate. Superstition, mingled frequently with some portion of craft, supplied what they wanted in science. They imputed the origin of diseases to

supernatural influence, and prescribed or performed a variety of mysterious rites, which they gave out to be of such efficacy as to remove the most dangerous and inveterate maladies. The credulity and love of the marvellous, natural to uninformed men, favoured the deception, and prepared them to be the dupes of those impostors. Among savages, their first physicians are a kind of conjurors or wizards, who boast that they know what is past, and can fortell what is to come. Incantations, sorcery, and mummeries of diverse kinds, no less strange than frivolous, are the means which they employ to expel the imaginary causes of malignity [*f*]; and relying upon the efficacy of these, they predict with confidence what will be the fate of their deluded patients. Thus superstition, in its earliest form, flowed from the solicitude of man to be delivered from present distress, not from his dread of evils awaiting him in a future life, and was originally ingrafted on medicine, not on religion. One of the first, and most intelligent historians of America, was struck with this alliance between the art of divination and that of physic, among the people of Hispaniola [*g*]. But this was not peculiar to them. The *Alexis*, the *Piayas*, the *Autuoms*, or whatever was the distinguishing name of their diviners and charmers in other parts of America, were all the physicians of their respective tribes, in the same manner as the *Buhitos* of Hispaniola. As their function led them to apply to the human mind when infeebled by sickness, and as they found it, in that season of dejection, prone to be alarmed with imaginary fears, or amused with vain hopes, they easily induced it to rely with implicit confidence on the virtue of their spells, and the certainty of their predictions [*h*].

[*f*] P. Melch. Hernandez, Memorial de Chiriqui. Collect. Orig. Pap. i. [*g*] Oviedo, lib. v. c. 1. [*h*] Herrera, dec. i. lib. iii. c. 4. Osborne, Coll. ii. 820. Dumont, i. 169, &c.

Whenever men acknowledge the reality of supernatural power and discernment in one instance, they have a propensity to admit it in others. The Americans did not long suppose the efficacy of conjuration to be confined to one subject. They had recourse to it in every situation of danger or distress. When the events of war were peculiarly disastrous, when they met with unforeseen disappointments in hunting, when inundations or drought threatened their crops with destruction, they called upon their conjurors to begin their incantations, in order to discover the causes of those calamities, or to fortell what would be their issue [*i*]. Their confidence in this delusive art gradually increased, and manifested itself in all the occurrences of life. When involved in any difficulty, or about to enter upon any transaction of moment, every individual regularly consulted the sorcerer, and depended upon his instructions to extricate him from the former, as well as to direct his conduct in the latter. Even among the rudest tribes in America, superstition appears in this form, and divination is an art in high esteem. Long before man had acquired such knowledge of a deity as inspires reverence, and leads to adoration, we observe him stretching out a presumptuous hand to draw aside that veil with which Providence kindly conceals its purposes from human knowledge; and we find him labouring, with fruitless anxiety, to penetrate into the mysteries of the divine administration. To discern, and to worship a superintending power, is an evidence of the enlargement and maturity of the human understanding; a vain desire of prying into futurity is the error of its infancy, and a proof of its weakness.

Charlev. N. Fr. iii. 361. 364, &c. Lawson N. Carol. 214. Ribas, Triumph. p. 17. Biet, 386. De la Potherie, ii. 35, &c.

[*i*] Charlev. N. Fr. iii. 3. Dumont, i. 173. Fernand. Relac. de los Chiquit. p. 40. Lozano, 84. Margrave, 279.

From this weakness proceeded likewise the faith of the Americans in dreams, their observation of omens, their attention to the chirping of birds, and the cries of animals, all which they suppose to be indications of future events, and if any one of these prognostics is deemed unfavourable, they instantly abandon the pursuit of those measures on which they are most eagerly bent [4].

VIII. But if we would form a complete idea of the uncultivated nations of America, we must not pass unobserved some singular customs, which, though universal and characteristic, could not be reduced, with propriety, to any of the articles into which I have divided my inquiry concerning their manners.

Among savages, in every part of the globe, the love of dancing is a favourite passion. As, during a great part of their time, they languish in a state of inactivity and indolence, without any occupation to rouse or interest them, they delight universally in a pastime which calls forth the active powers of their nature into exercise. The Spaniards, when they first visited America, were astonished at the fondness of the natives for dancing, and beheld with wonder a people, cold and unanimated in most of their other pursuits, kindle into life, and exert themselves with ardour, as often as this favourite amusement recurred. Among them, indeed, dancing ought not to be denominated an amusement. It is a serious and important occupation, which mingles in every occurrence of public or private life. If any intercourse be necessary between two American tribes, the ambassadors of the one approach in a solemn dance, and present the calumet or emblem of peace; the sachems of the other receive it with the same ceremony [5].

[4] Charlev. N. Fr. iii. 262, 353. Stadius, ap. de Bry, iii. 129. Creuxj. Hist. Canad. 81. Ticho, Hist. of Parag. Church. Coll. vi. 37. De la Potherie, n. 6. [5] De la Potherie, Hist. ii. 17, &c. Charlev. N. Fr. ii. 211, 297. Lahontan, i. 100, 137. Hennepin. Decou. 146, &c.

If war is denounced against an enemy, it is by a dance, expressive of the resentment which they feel, and of the vengeance which they meditate [*m*]. If the wrath of their gods is to be appeased, or their beneficence to be celebrated; if they rejoice at the birth of a child, or mourn the death of a friend [*n*], they have dances appropriated to each of these situations, and suited to the different sentiments with which they are then animated. If a person is indisposed, a dance is prescribed as the most effectual means of restoring him to health; and if himself cannot endure the fatigue of such an exercise, the physician or conjuror performs it in his name, as if the virtue of his activity could be transferred to his patient [*o*].

All their dances are imitations of some action; and though the music by which they are regulated is extremely simple and tiresome to the ear by its dull monotony, some of their dances appear wonderfully expressive and animated. The war dance is, perhaps, the most striking. It is the representation of a complete American campaign. The departure of the warriors from their village, their march into the enemy's country, the caution with which they encamp, the address with which they station some of their party in ambush, the manner of surprising the enemy, the noise and ferocity of the combat, the scalping of those who are slain, the seizing of prisoners, the triumphant return of the conquerors, and the torture of the victims, are successively exhibited. The performers enter with such enthusiastic ardour into their several parts, their gestures, their countenance, their voice, are so wild and so well adapted to their various situations, that Europeans can hardly believe it to be a mimic

[*m*] Charlev. N. Fr. iii. 298. Lafitau, i. 523. [*n*] Joutel. 343. Gomara, Hist. Gen. c. 196. [*o*] Denys, Hist. Nat. 189. Erickson, 372. De la Potherie, ii. 36.

scene, or view it without emotions of fear and horror [p].

But however expressive some of the American dances may be, there is one circumstance in them remarkable, and connected with the character of the race. The songs, the dances, the amusements of these nations, expressive of the sentiments which animate their hearts, are often adapted to display or excite that sensibility which mutually attaches the sexes. Among some people, such is the ardour of this passion, that love is almost the sole object of activity and joy; and as rude nations are strangers to delicacy, and unaccustomed to disguise any notion of their minds, their dances are often extremely wanton and indecent. Such is the *Calenda*, which the natives of Africa are so passionately fond [q]; and such the feasts of the dancing girls, which the Asiatics contemplate with so much avidity and desire. But, among the Americans, more cold and indifferent to their females, from causes which I have already explained, the passion of love mingles but little with their festivals and pastimes. Their songs and dances are mostly solemn and martial; they are connected with some of the serious and important affairs of life [r], and having no relation to love or gallantry are seldom common to the two sexes, but executed by men and women apart [s]. On some occasions, the women are permitted to join in the festival, the character of the entertainment is still the same, and no movement or gesture

[p] De la Potherie, ii. 116. Charlev. N. Fr. iii. 297. Lafitau, 523. [q] Adanson, Voyage to Senegal, p. iii. 287. Labat, Voyages, iv. 463. Sloane, Hist. Nat. of Jam. Introd. p. 48. Ramin. Descrip. de Surin. i. p. 139. [r] Descript. of N. Am. Osborn, Coll. ii. 883. Charlev. N. Fr. iii. 84. [s] Wafer's Account of Isthmus, &c. 169. Lery ap. de Bry, 177. Lozano, Hist. de Parag. i. 149. Herrera, dec. 2. lib. c. 8. dec. 4. lib. x. c. 4. See NOTE XC.



is expressive of attachment, or encourages familiarity [1].

An immoderate love of play, especially at games of hazard, which seems to be natural to all people unaccustomed to the occupations of regular industry, is likewise universal among the Americans. The same causes, which so often prompt persons in civilized life, who are at their ease, to have recourse to this pastime, render it the delight of the savage. The former are independent of labour, the latter do not feel the necessity of it ; and as both are unemployed, they run with transport to whatever is interesting enough to stir and to agitate their minds. Hence the Americans, who at other times are so indifferent, so phlegmatic, so silent, and animated with so few desires, as soon as they engage in play become rapacious, impatient, noisy, and almost frantic with eagerness. Their furs, their domestic utensils, their clothes, their arms, are staked at the gaming-table, and when all is lost, high as their sense of independence is, in a wild emotion of despair or of hope, they will often risk their personal liberty upon a single cast [u]. Among several tribes, such gaming parties frequently recur, and become their most acceptable entertainment at every great festival. Superstition, which is apt to take hold of those passions which are most vigorous, frequently lends its aid to confirm and strengthen this favourite inclination. Their conjurors are accustomed to prescribe a solemn match at play, as one of the most efficacious methods of appeasing their gods, or of restoring the sick to health [x].

From causes similar to those which render them fond of play, the Americans are extremely addicted to drunkenness. It seems to have been one of the

[1] Barrere, *Fr. Equin.* p. 191. [u] Charlev. *N. Fr.* iii. 261, 318. Lafitau, ii. 338, &c. Ribas, *Triumph.* 13. Brickell, 355. [x] Charlev. *N. Fr.* iii. 262.

first exertions of human ingenuity to discover some composition of an intoxicating quality ; and there is hardly any nation so rude, or so destitute of invention, as not to have succeeded in this fatal research. The most barbarous of the American tribes have been so unfortunate as to attain this art ; and even those which are so deficient in knowledge, as to be unacquainted with the method of giving an inebriating strength to liquors by fermentation, can accomplish the same end by other means. The people of the islands of North America, and of California, used for this purpose the smoke of tobacco, drawn up with a certain instrument into the nostrils, the fumes of which ascending to the brain, they felt all the transports and frenzy of intoxication [y]. In almost every other part of the New World, the natives possessed the art of extracting an intoxicating liquor from maize or the manioc root, the same substances which they convert into bread. The operation by which they effect this, nearly resembles the common one of browning, but with this difference, that in place of yeast, they use a nauseous infusion of a certain quantity of maize or manioc chewed by their women. The saliva excites a vigorous fermentation, and in a few days the liquor becomes fit for drinking. It is not disagreeable to the taste, and when swallowed in large quantities, is of an intoxicating quality [z.] This is the general beverage of the Americans, which they distinguish by various names, and for which they feel such a violent and insatiable desire, as it is not easy either to conceive or describe. Among polished nations, where a succession of various functions and amusements keeps the mind in continual occupation, the desire for strong drink is regulated, in a great measure, by the

[y] Oviedo, Hist. ap. Ramus. iii. 113. Venegas, i. 68. Naufrag. de Cabeza de Vaca, c. 26. See NOTE XCI. [z] Statius ap. de Bry, iii. 111. Lery, *ibid.* 173.

climate, and increases or diminishes according to the variations of its temperature. In warm regions, the delicate and sensible frame of the inhabitants does not require the stimulation of fermented liquors. In colder countries, the constitution of the natives, more robust and more sluggish, stands in need of generous liquors to quicken and animate it. But among savages, the desire of something that is of power to intoxicate, is in every situation the same. All the people of America, if we except some small tribes near the Straits of Magellan, whether natives of the torrid zone, or inhabitants of its more temperate regions, or placed by a harder fate in the severe climates towards its northern or southern extremity, appear to be equally under the dominion of this appetite [a]. Such a similarity of taste, among people in such different situations, must be ascribed to the influence of some moral cause, and cannot be considered as the effect of any physical or constitutional want. While engaged in war or in the chase, the savage is often in the most interesting situations, and all the powers of his nature are roused to the most vigorous exertions. But those animating scenes are succeeded by long intervals of repose, during which the warrior meets with nothing that he deems of sufficient dignity or importance to merit his attention. He languishes and mopes in this season of indolence. The posture of his body is an emblem of the state of his mind. In one climate, cowering over the fire in his cabin; in another, stretched under the shade of some tree, he doses away his time in sleep, or in an unthinking joyless inactivity, not far removed from it. As strong liquors awake him from this torpid state, give a brisker motion to his

[a] Gumilla, i. 257. Lozano, Descrip. del Gran Chaco, 55, 103. Ribas, 8. Ulloa, i. 249, 337. Marchias, iv. 496. Fernandez, Mission. de los Chiquit. 35. Barrere, p. 203. Blanco, Convers. de Piritu, 31.

its, and enliven him more thoroughly than either  
 cing or gaming, his love of them is excessive. A  
 ge, when not engaged in action, is a pensive me-  
 holy animal; but as soon as he tastes, or has a  
 spect of tasting, the intoxicating draught, he be-  
 es gay and frolicsome [b]. Whatever be the  
 sion or pretext on which the Americans assem-  
 the meeting always terminates in a debauch.  
 y of their festivals have no other object, and  
 welcome the return of them with transports of

As they are not accustomed to restrain any  
 ite, they set no bounds to this. The riot often  
 inues without intermission several days; and  
 ever may be the fatal effects of their excess,  
 never cease from drinking as long as one drop  
 quor remains. The persons of greatest eminence,  
 most distinguished warriors, and the chiefs most  
 owned for their wisdom, have no greater com-  
 d of themselves than the most obscure member  
 he community. Their eagerness for present en-  
 nent renders them blind to its fatal consequences;

those very men, who, in other situations, seem  
 ossess a force of mind more than humane, are  
 his instance inferior to children in foresight, as  
 as consideration, and mere slaves of brutal appe-  
 [c]. When their passions, naturally strong, are  
 htened and inflamed by drink, they are guilty  
 he most enormous outrages, and the festivity  
 om concludes without deeds of violence or blood-  
 d [d].

ut, amidst this wild debauch, there is one cir-  
 stance remarkable; the women, in most of the  
 erican tribes, are not permitted to partake of it

Their province is to prepare the liquor, to  
 e it about to the guests, and to take care of their

[b] Melendez Tesorez Verdad. iii. 369. [c] Ribas, 9.  
 a, i. 338. [d] Lettr. Edif. ii. 178. Torquemada, Mond.  
 i, 335. [e] See NOTE XCII.

husbands and friends, when their reason is overpowered. This exclusion of the women from an enjoyment so highly valued by savages, may be justly considered as a mark of their inferiority, and as an additional evidence of that contempt with which they were treated in the New World. The people of North America, when first discovered, were not acquainted with any intoxicating drink : but as the Europeans early found it their interest to supply them with spirituous liquors, drunkenness soon became as universal among them as among their countrymen to the south ; and their women having acquired this new taste, indulge it with as little decency and moderation as the men [*f*].

It were endless to enumerate all the detached customs which have excited the wonder of travellers in America ; but I cannot omit one seemingly as singular as any that has been mentioned. When their parents and other relations become old, or labour under any distemper which their slender knowledge of the healing art cannot remove, the Americans cut short their days with a violent hand, in order to be relieved from the burden of supporting and tending them. This practice prevailed among the ruder tribes in every part of the continent, from Hudson's Bay to the river De la Plata ; and however shocking it may be to those sentiments of tenderness and attachment, which, in civilized life, we are apt to consider as congenial with our frame, the condition of man in the savage state leads and reconciles him to it. The same hardships and difficulty of procuring subsistence, which deter savages, in some cases, from rearing their children, prompt them to destroy the aged and infirm. The declining state of the one is as helpless as the infancy of the other. The former are no less unable than the latter to perform the functions that belong to a warrior or hunter, or to

[*f*] Hutchinson, Hist. of Massachus. 469. Lafitau, ii. 123. Sagard, 146.

endure those various distresses in which savages are so often involved, by their own want of foresight and industry. Their relations feel this, and, incapable of attending to the wants or weaknesses of others, their impatience under an additional burden prompts them to extinguish that life which they find it difficult to sustain. This is not regarded as a deed of cruelty, but as an act of mercy. An American broken with years and infirmities, conscious that he can no longer depend on the aid of those around him, places himself contentedly in his grave ; and it is by the hands of his children or nearest relations that the thong is pulled, or the blow inflicted, which releases him for ever from the sorrows of life [g].

IX. After contemplating the rude American tribes in such various lights, after taking a view of their customs and manners from so many different stations, nothing remains but to form a general estimate of their character, compared with that of more polished nations. A human being, as he comes originally from the hand of Nature, is every where the same. At his first appearance in the state of infancy, whether it be among the rudest savages, or in the most civilized nation, we can discern no quality which marks any distinction of superiority. The capacity of improvement seems to be the same ; and the talents he may afterwards acquire, as well as the virtues he may be rendered capable of exercising, depend, in a great measure, upon the state of society in which he is placed. To this state his mind naturally accomodates itself, and from it receives discipline and culture. In proportion to the wants which it accustoms a human being to feel, and the functions in which these engage him, his intellectual powers are called forth. According to the connections which it establishes between him and the rest of his species,

[g] Cassani, *Histor. de N. Reyno de Gran.* p. 303. Piso, p. 6. Ellis, *Voy.* 191. Gumilla, i. 333.

the affections of his heart are exerted. It is only by attending to this great principle, that we can discover what is the character of man in every different period of his progress.

If we apply it to savage life, and measure the attainments of the human mind in that state by this standard, we shall find, according to an observation which I have already made, that the intellectual powers of man must be extremely limited in their operations. They are confined within the narrow sphere of what he deems necessary for supplying his own wants. Whatever has not some relation to these, neither attracts his attention, nor is the object of his inquiries. But, however narrow the bounds may be within which the knowledge of a savage is circumscribed, he possesses thoroughly that small portion which he has attained. It was not communicated to him by formal instruction ; he does not attend to it as a matter of mere speculation and curiosity ; it is the result of his own observation, the fruit of his own experience, and accommodated to his condition and exigencies. While employed in the active occupations of war or of hunting, he often finds himself in difficult and perilous situations, from which the efforts of his own sagacity must extricate him. He is frequently engaged in measures, where every step depends upon his own ability to decide, where he must rely solely upon his own penetration to discern the dangers to which he is exposed, and upon his own wisdom in providing against them. In consequence of this, he feels the knowledge which he possesses, and the efforts which he makes, and either in deliberation or action rests on himself alone.

As the talents of individuals are exercised and improved by such exertions, much political wisdom is said to be displayed in conducting the affairs of their small communities. The council of old men in an

American tribe, deliberating upon its interests, and determining with respect to peace or war, has been compared to the senate in more polished republics. The proceedings of the former, we are told, are often no less formal and sagacious than those of the latter. Great political wisdom is exhibited in pondering the various measures proposed, and in balancing their probable advantages, against the evils of which they may be productive. Much address and eloquence are employed by the leaders, who aspire at acquiring such confidence with their countrymen, as to have an ascendant in those assemblies [*h*]. But, among savage tribes, the field for displaying political talents cannot be extensive. Where the idea of private property is incomplete, and no criminal jurisdiction is established, there is hardly any function of internal government to exercise. Where there is no commerce, and scarcely any intercourse among separate tribes; where enmity is implacable, and hostilities are carried on almost without intermission; there will be few points of public concern to adjust with their neighbours; and that department of their affairs which may be denominated foreign, cannot be so intricate as to require much refined policy in conducting it. Where individuals are so thoughtless and improvident as seldom to take effectual precautions for self-preservation, it is vain to expect that public measures and deliberations will be regulated by the contemplation of remote events. It is the genius of savages to act from the impulse of present passion. They have neither foresight nor temper to form complicated arrangements with respect to their future conduct. The consultations of the Americans, indeed, are so frequent, and their negotiations are so many [*i*], and so long protracted, as to give their proceedings an extraordinary aspect of wisdom. But this is not owing so much to the

[*h*] Charlev. N. Fr. iii. 269, &c. [*i*] See NOTE XCIII.



depth of their schemes, as to the coldness and phlegm of their temper, which render them slow in determining [*k*]. If we except the celebrated league, that united the Five Nations in Canada into a federal republic, which shall be considered in its proper place, we can discern few such traces of political wisdom, among the rude American tribes, as discover any great degree of foresight or extent of intellectual abilities. Even among them, we shall find public measures more frequently directed by the impetuous ferocity of their youth, than regulated by the experience and wisdom of their old men.

As the condition of man in the savage state is unfavourable to the progress of the understanding, it has a tendency likewise, in some respects, to check the exercise of affection, and to render the heart contracted. The strongest feeling in the mind of a savage is a sense of his own independence. He has sacrificed so small a portion of his natural liberty by becoming a member of society, that he remains, in a great degree, the sole master of his own actions [*l*]. He often takes his resolutions alone, without consulting, or feeling any connection with the persons around him. In many of his operations, he stands as much detached from the rest of his species, as if he had formed no union with them. Conscious how little he depends upon other men, he is apt to view them with a careless indifference. Even the force of his mind contributes to increase this unconcern, and as he looks not beyond himself in deliberating with respect to the part which he should act, his solicitude about the consequences of it seldom extends farther. He pursues his own career, and indulges his own fancy, without inquiring or regarding whether what he does be agreeable or offensive to others, whether they may derive benefit or re-

[*k*] Charlev. N. Fr. iii. 271.

[*l*] Fernandez, Mission. de los Chiquit. 33.

ceive hurt from it. Hence the ungovernable caprice of savages, their impatience under any species of restraint, their inability to suppress or moderate any inclination, the scorn or neglect with which they receive advice, their high estimation of themselves, and their contempt of other men. Among them, the pride of independence produces almost the same effects with interestedness in a more advanced state of society; it refers every thing to a man himself, it leads him to be indifferent about the manner in which his actions may affect other men, and renders the gratification of his own wishes the measure and end of conduct.

To the same cause may be imputed the hardness of heart, and insensibility, remarkable in all savage nations. Their minds, roused only by strong emotions, are little susceptible of gentle, delicate, or tender affections [*m*]. Their union is so incomplete, that each individual acts as if he retained all his natural rights entire and undiminished. If a favour is conferred upon him, or any beneficial service is performed on his account, he receives it with much satisfaction, because it contributes to his enjoyment; but this sentiment extends not beyond himself, it excites no sense of obligation, he neither feels gratitude nor thinks of making any return [*n*]. Even among persons the most closely connected, the exchange of those good offices which strengthen attachment, mollify the heart, and sweeten the intercourse of life, is not frequent. The high ideas of independence among the Americans nourish a sullen reserve, which keeps them at a distance from each other. The nearest relations are mutually afraid to make any demand, or to solicit any service [*o*], least it should be considered by the other as imposing a burden or laying a restraint upon his will.

[*m*] Charlev. N. Fr. iii. 309.  
xvi. c. 2. See NOTE XCIV.

[*n*] Oviedo, Hist. lib.  
[*o*] De la Potherie, iii. 28.

I have already remarked the influence of this hard unfeeling temper upon domestic life, with respect to the connection between husband and wife, as well as that between parents and children. Its effects are no less conspicuous, in the performance of those mutual offices of tenderness which the infirmities of our nature frequently exact. Among some tribes, when any of their number are seized with any violent disease, they are generally abandoned by all around them, who, careless of their recovery, fly in the utmost consternation from the supposed danger of infection [*p*]. But even where they are not thus deserted, the cold indifference with which they are attended can afford them little consolation. No look of sympathy, no soothing expressions, no officious services, contribute to alleviate the distress of the sufferers, or to make them forget what they endure [*q*]. Their nearest relations will often refuse to submit to the smallest inconveniency, or to part with the least trifle, however much it may tend to their accomodation or relief [*r*]. So little is the breast of a savage susceptible of those sentiments which prompt men to that feeling attention which mitigates the calamities of human life, that, in some provinces of America, the Spaniards have found it necessary to inforce the common duties of humanity by positive laws, and to oblige husbands and wives, parents and children, under severe penalties, to take care of each other during their sickness [*s*]. The same harshness of temper is still more conspicuous in their treatment of the animal creation. Prior to their intercourse with the people of Europe, the North Americans

[*p*] Lettre de P. Cataneo ap. Muratori Christian, i. 309. Tertre, ii. 410. Lozano, 100. Herrera, dec. 4. lib. viii. c. 5. dec. 5. lib. iv. c. 2. Faulkner's Descript. of Patagonia, 98.  
[*q*] Gumilla, i. 329. Lozano, 100. [*r*] Garcia, Origen, &c. 90. Herrera, dec. 4. lib. viii. c. 5. [*s*] Cogulludo, Hist. de Yucatan. p. 300.

had some tame dogs, which accompanied them in their hunting excursions, and served them with all the ardour and fidelity peculiar to the species. But, instead of that fond attachment which the hunter naturally feels towards those useful companions of his toils, they requite their services with neglect, seldom feed, and never caress them [*t*]. In other provinces, the Americans have become acquainted with the domestic animals of Europe, and avail themselves of their service ; but it is universally observed that they always treat them harshly [*u*], and never employ any method, either for breaking or managing them, but force and cruelty. In every part of the deportment of man in his savage state, whether towards his equals of the human species, or towards the animals below him, we recognize the same character, and trace the operations of a mind intent on its own gratifications, and regulated by its own caprice, with little attention or sensibility to the sentiments and feelings of the beings around him.

After explaining how unfavourable the savage state is to the cultivation of the understanding, and to the improvement of the heart, I should not have thought it necessary to mention what may be deemed its lesser defects, if the character of nations, as well as of individuals, were not often more distinctly marked by circumstances apparently trivial than by those of greater moment. A savage, frequently placed in situations of danger and distress, depending on himself alone, and wrapt up in his own thoughts and schemes, is a serious melancholy animal. His attention to others is small. The range of his own ideas is narrow. Hence that taciturnity which is so disgusting to men accustomed to the open intercourse of social conversation. When they are not

[*t*] Charlev. N. Fr. iii. 119. 337.

[*u*] Ulloa, Notic. American. 312.

engaged in action, the Americans often sit whole days in one posture, without opening their lips [*x*]. When they go forth to war, or to the chase, they usually march in a line at some distance from one another, and without exchanging a word. The same profound silence is observed when they row together in a canoe [*y*]. It is only when they are animated by intoxicating liquors, or roused by the jollity of the festival and dance, that they become gay and conversible.

To the same causes may be imputed the refined cunning with which they form and execute their schemes. Men, who are not habituated to a liberal communication of their own sentiments and wishes, are apt to be so distrustful, as to place little confidence in others, and to have recourse to an insidious craft in accomplishing their own purposes. In civilized life, those persons, who, by their situation, have but a few objects of pursuit on which their minds incessantly dwell are most remarkable for low artifice in carrying on their little projects. Among savages, whose views are equally confined, and their attention no less persevering, those circumstances must operate still more powerfully, and gradually accustom them to a disingenuous subtlety in all their transactions. The force of this is increased by habits which they acquire in carrying on the two most interesting operations wherein they are engaged. With them war is a system of craft, in which they trust for success to stratagem more than to open force, and have their invention continually on the stretch to circumvent and surprise their enemies. As hunters, it is their constant object to ensnare, in order that they may destroy. Accordingly, art and cunning have been universally observed as distinguishing characteristics of all savages. The people of the rude tribes of America are remarkable for their

[*x*] Voyage de Bouguer, 102.

[*y*] Charlev. iii. 340.

artifice and duplicity. Impenetrably secret in forming their measures, they pursue them with a patient undeviating attention, and there is no refinement of dissimulation which they cannot employ, in order to insure success. The natives of Peru were engaged above thirty years, in concerting the plan of that insurrection which took place under the vice-royalty of the marquis de Villa-Garcia; and though it was communicated to a great number of persons in all different ranks, no indication of it ever transpired during that long period; no man betrayed his trust, or by an unguarded look, or rash word, gave rise to any suspicion of what was intended [z]. The dissimulation and craft of individuals is no less remarkable than that of nations. When set upon deceiving, they wrap themselves up so artificially, that it is impossible to penetrate into their intentions, or to detect their designs [a].

But if there be defects or vices peculiar to the savage state, there are likewise virtues which it inspires, and good qualities, to the exercise of which it is friendly. The bonds of society sit so loose upon the members of the more rude American tribes, that they hardly feel any restraint. Hence the spirit of independence, which is the pride of a savage, and which he considers as the unalienable prerogative of man. Incapable of control, and disdaining to acknowledge any superior, his mind, though limited in its powers, and erring in many of its pursuits, acquires such elevation by the consciousness of its own freedom, that he acts on some occasions with astonishing force, and perseverance, and dignity.

As independence nourishes this high spirit among savages, the perpetual wars in which they are engaged call it forth into action. Such long intervals of tranquillity as are frequent in polished societies

[z] Voyage de Ulloa, ii. 300.

[a] Gumilla, i. 162. Charlev. iii. 109.

are unknown in the savage state. Their enmities, as I have observed, are implacable and immortal. The valour of the young men is never allowed to rust in inaction. The hatchet is always in their hand, either for attack or defence. Even in their hunting excursions, they must be on their guard against surprise from the hostile tribes, by which they are surrounded. Accustomed to continual alarms, they grow familiar with danger; courage becomes an habitual virtue, resulting naturally from their situation, and strengthened by constant exertions. The mode of displaying fortitude may not be the same in small and rude communities, as in more powerful and civilized states. Their system of war, and standard of valour, may be formed upon different principles, but in no situation does the human mind rise more superior to the sense of danger, or the dread of death, than in its most simple and uncultivated state.

Another virtue remarkable among savages, is attachment to the community of which they are members. From the nature of their political union, one might expect this tie to be extremely feeble. But there are circumstances which render the influence, even of their loose mode of association, very powerful. The American tribes are small; combined against their neighbours, in prosecution of ancient enmities, or in avenging recent injuries, their interests and operations are neither numerous nor complex. These are objects which the uncultivated understanding of a savage cannot comprehend. His heart is capable of forming connections, which are so little diffused. He assents with warmth to public measures, dictated by passions similar to those which direct his own conduct. Hence the ardour with which individuals undertake the most perilous service, when the community deems it necessary. Hence their fierce and deep-rooted antipathy to the public enemies. Hence their zeal for the honour of their

tribe, and that love of their country, which prompts them to brave danger that it may triumph, and to endure the most exquisite torments, without a groan, that it may not be disgraced.

Thus in every situation where a human being can be placed, even the most unfavourable, there are virtues which peculiarly belong to it; there are affections which it calls forth; there is a species of happiness which it yields. Nature, with most beneficent intention, conciliates and forms the mind to its condition; the ideas and wishes of man extend not beyond that state of society to which he is habituated. What it presents as objects of contemplation or enjoyment fills and satisfies his mind, and he can hardly conceive any other mode of life to be pleasant, or even tolerable. The Tartar, accustomed to roam over extensive plains, and to subsist on the product of his herds, imprecates upon his enemy, as the greatest of all curses, that he may be condemned to reside in one place, and to be nourished with the top of a weed. The rude Americans, fond of their own pursuits, and satisfied with their own lot, are equally unable to comprehend the intention or utility of the various accommodations which, in more polished society, are deemed essential to the comfort of life. Far from complaining of their own situation, or viewing that of men in a more improved state with admiration or envy, they regard themselves as the standard of excellence, as beings the best entitled, as well as the most perfectly qualified, to enjoy real happiness. Unaccustomed to any restraint upon their will or their actions, they behold with amazement the inequality of rank and the subordination which take place in civilized life, and consider the voluntary submission of one man to another as a renunciation, no less base than unaccountable, of the first distinction of humanity. Void of foresight, as well as free from care themselves, and delighted



with that state of indolent security, they wonder at the anxious precautions, the unceasing industry, and complicated arrangements of Europeans, in guarding against distant evils, or providing for future wants; and they often exclaim against their preposterous folly, in thus multiplying the troubles, and increasing the labour of life [b]. This preference of their own manners is conspicuous on every occasion. Even the names, by which the various nations wish to be distinguished, are assumed from this idea of their own pre-eminence. The appellation which the Iroquois give to themselves is, *the chief of men* [c]. *Caraibe*, the original name of the fierce inhabitants of the Windward Islands, signifies *the warlike people* [d]. The Cherokees, from an idea of their own superiority, call the Europeans *Nothings*, or *the accursed race*, and assume to themselves the name of *the beloved people* [e]. The same principle regulated the notions of the other Americans concerning the Europeans; for although, at first, they were filled with astonishment at their arts, and with dread of their power, they soon came to abate their estimation of men, whose maxims of life were so different from their own. Hence they called them *the froth of the sea*, men without father or mother. They supposed, that either they had no country of their own, and therefore invaded that which belonged to others [f]; or that, being destitute of the necessaries of life at home, they were obliged to roam over the ocean, in order to rob such as were more amply provided.

Men, thus satisfied with their condition, are far from any inclination to relinquish their own habits, or to adopt those of civilized life. The transition is

[b] Charlev. N. Fr. iii. 308. Lahontan, ii. 97.

[c] Colden, 1. 3. [d] Rochefort, Hist. des Antilles, 455.

[e] Adair, Hist. of Amer. Indians, p. 32.

[f] Benzon. Hist. Novi Orbis, lib. iii. c. 21.

too violent to be suddenly made. Even where endeavours have been used to wean a savage from his own customs, and to render the accommodations of polished society familiar to him ; even where he has been allowed to taste of those pleasures, and has been honoured with those distinctions, which are the chief objects of our desire, he droops and languishes under the restraint of laws and forms, he seizes the first opportunity of breaking loose from them, and returns with transport to the forest or the wild, where he can enjoy a careless and uncontrolled freedom [g].

Thus I have finished a laborious delineation of the character and manners of the uncivilized tribes scattered over the vast continent of America. In this, I aspire not at rivalling the great masters who have painted and adorned savage life, either in boldness of design, or in the glow and beauty of their colouring. I am satisfied with the more humble merit of having persisted with patient industry, in viewing my subject in many various lights, and collecting from the most accurate observers such detached, and often minute features, as might enable me to exhibit a portrait that resembles the original.

Before I close this part of my work, one observation more is necessary, in order to justify the conclusions which I have formed, or to prevent the mistakes into which such as examine them may fall. In contemplating the inhabitants of a country so widely extended as America, great attention should be paid to the diversity of climates under which they are placed. The influence of this I have pointed out with respect to several important particulars, which have been the object of research ; but even where it has not been mentioned, it ought not to be overlooked. The provinces of America are of such different temperament, that this alone is sufficient to constitute a distinction between their inhabitants.

[g] Charlev. N. Fr. iii. 322.

In every part of the earth where man exists, the power of climate operates, with decisive influence, upon his condition and character. In those countries which approach near to the extremes of heat or cold, this influence is so conspicuous as to strike every eye. Whether we consider man merely as an animal, or as being endowed with rational powers which fit him for activity and speculation, we shall find that he has uniformly attained the greatest perfection of which his nature is capable, in the temperate regions of the globe. There his constitution is most vigorous, his organs most acute, and his form most beautiful. There, too, he possesses a superior extent of capacity, greater fertility of imagination, more enterprising courage, and a sensibility of heart which gives birth to desires, not only ardent, but persevering. In this favourite situation he has displayed the utmost efforts of his genius, in literature, in policy, in commerce, in war, and in all the arts which improve or embellish life [h].

This powerful operation of climate is felt most sensibly by rude nations, and produces greater effects than in societies more improved. The talents of civilized men are continually exerted in rendering their own condition more comfortable; and by their ingenuity and inventions, they can, in a great measure, supply the defects, and guard against the inconveniences of any climate. But the improvident savage is affected by every circumstance peculiar to his situation. He takes no precaution either to mitigate or improve it. Like a plant or an animal, he is formed by the climate under which he is placed, and feels the full force of its influence.

In surveying the rude nations of America, this natural distinction between the inhabitants of the temperate and torrid zones is very remarkable. They

[h] Dr. Ferguson's Essay on the Hist. of Civil Society, part iii. c. 1.

may, accordingly, be divided into two great classes. The one comprehends all the North Americans, from the river St. Laurence to the Gulf of Mexico, together with the people of Chili, and a few small tribes towards the extremity of the southern continent. To the other belong all the inhabitants of the islands, and those settled in the various provinces which extend from the isthmus of Darien almost to the southern confines of Brasil, along the east side of the Andes. In the former, which comprehends all the regions of the temperate zone that in America are inhabited, the human species appears manifestly to be more perfect. The natives are more robust, more active, more intelligent, and more courageous. They possess, in the most eminent degree, that force of mind and love of independence which I have pointed out as the chief virtues of man in his savage state. They have defended their liberty with persevering fortitude against the Europeans, who subdued the other rude nations of America with the greatest ease. The natives of the temperate zone are the only people in the New World who are indebted for their freedom to their own valour. The North Americans, though long encompassed by three formidable European powers, still retain part of their original possessions, and continue to exist as independent nations. The people of Chili, though early invaded, still maintain a gallant contest with the Spaniards, and have set bounds to their encroachments; whereas, in the warmer regions, men are more feeble in their frame, less vigorous in the efforts of their mind, of a gentle but dastardly spirit, more enslaved by pleasure, and more sunk in indolence. Accordingly, it is in the torrid zone that the Europeans have most completely established their dominion over America; the most fertile and desirable provinces in it are subjected to their yoke; and if several tribes there still enjoy independence, it is either because they have never been

attacked by an enemy already satiated with conquest, and possessed of larger territories than he was able to occupy, or because they have been saved from oppression by their remote and inaccessible situation,

Conspicuous as this distinction may appear between the inhabitants of those different regions, it is not, however, universal. Moral and political causes, as I have formerly observed, affect the disposition and character of individuals as well as nations, still more powerfully than the influence of climate. There are, accordingly, some tribes, in various parts of the torrid zone, possessed of courage, high spirit, and the love of independence, in a degree hardly inferior to the natives of more temperate climates. We are too little acquainted with the history of those people, to be able to trace the several circumstances in their progress and condition, to which they are indebted for this remarkable pre-eminence. The fact, nevertheless, is certain. As early as the first voyage of Columbus, he received information that several of the islands were inhabited by the *Caribbees*, a fierce race of men, nowise resembling their feeble and timid neighbours. In his second expedition to the New World, he found this information to be just, and was himself a witness of their intrepid valour [i]. The same character they have maintained invariably in all subsequent contests with the people of Europe [k]; and, even in our times, we have seen them make a gallant stand in defence of the last territory which the rapacity of their invaders had left in their possession [l]. Some nations in Brasil were no less eminent for vigour of mind, and bravery in war [m]. The people of the isthmus of Darien boldly met the Spaniards in the field, and frequently repelled those formidable invaders [n]. Other instances might be

[i] Life of Columbus, c. 47, 48. See NOTE XCV.

[k] Rochefort, Hist. des Antilles, 581.

[l] See NOTE

XCVI. [m] Lery ap. de Bry, iii. 207, &c.

[n] Herrera,

dec. 1. lib. x. c. 15, &c.: dec. 2. passim.

produced. It is not attending to any single cause or principle, how powerful and extensive soever its influence may appear, that we can explain the actions, or account for the character of men. Even the law of climate, more universal, perhaps, in its operation than any that affects the human species, cannot be applied, in judging of their conduct, without any exceptions.

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## BOOK V.

1518.] **W**HEN Grijalva returned to Cuba, he found the armament destined to attempt the conquest of that rich country which he had discovered, almost complete. Not only ambition, but avarice, had urged Velasquez to hasten his preparations; and having such a prospect of gratifying both, he had advanced considerable sums out of his private fortune towards defraying the expence of the expedition. At the same time, he exerted his influence as governor, in engaging the most distinguished persons in the colony to undertake the service [a]. At a time when the spirit of the Spanish nation was adventurous to excess, a number of soldiers, eager to embark in any daring enterprise, soon appeared. But it was not so easy to find a person qualified to take the command in an expedition of so much importance; and the character of Velasquez, who had the right of nomination, greatly increased the difficulty of the choice. Though of most aspiring ambition, and not destitute of talents for government, he possessed neither such courage, nor such vigour and activity of mind, as to undertake in person the conduct of the armament which he was preparing. In this embarrassing situation, he formed the chimerical

[a] See NOTE XCVII.

scheme, not only of atchieving great exploits by a deputy, but of securing to himself the glory of conquests which were to be made by another. In the execution of this plan, he fondly aimed at reconciling contradictions. He was solicitous to choose a commander of intrepid resolution, and of superior abilities, because he knew these to be requisite in order to ensure success ; but, at the same time, from the jealousy natural to little minds, he wished this person to be of a spirit so tame and obsequious, as to be entirely dependent on his will. But when he came to apply those ideas in forming an opinion concerning the several officers, who occurred to his thoughts as worthy of being entrusted with the command, he soon perceived that it was impossible to find such incompatible qualities united in one character. Such as were distinguished for courage and talents were too high-spirited to be passive instruments in his hand. Those who appeared more gentle and tractable, were destitute of capacity, and unequal to the charge. This augmented his perplexity and his fears. He deliberated long, and with much solicitude, and was still wavering in his choice, when Amador de Lares, the royal treasurer in Cuba, and Andres Duero, his own secretary, the two persons in whom he chiefly confided, were encouraged by this irresolution to propose a new candidate, and they supported their recommendation with such assiduity and address, that no less fatally for Velasquez than happily for their country, it proved successful [b].

The man whom they pointed out to him was Fernando Cortes. He was born at Medellin, a small town in Estremadura, in the year one thousand four hundred and eighty-five, and descended from a family of noble blood, but of very moderate fortune. Being originally destined by his parents to the study of law,

[b] B. Diaz. c. 19. Gomara, Cron. c. 7. Herrera, dec. 2. lib. iii. c. 11.

as the most likely method of bettering his condition, he was sent early to the university of Salamanca, where he imbibed some tincture of learning. But he was soon disgusted with an academic life, which did not suit his ardent and restless genius, and retired to Medellin, where he gave himself up entirely to active sports and martial exercises. At this period of life, he was so impetuous, so overbearing, and so dissipated, that his father was glad to comply with his inclination, and send him abroad as an adventurer in arms. There were in that age two conspicuous theatres, on which such of the Spanish youth as courted military glory might display their valour; one in Italy, under the command of the Great Captain; the other in the New World. Cortes preferred the former, but was prevented by indisposition from embarking with a reinforcement of troops sent to Naples. Upon this disappointment he turned his views towards America, whither he was allured by the prospect of the advantages which he might derive from the patronage of Ovando [c], the governor of Hispaniola, who was his kinsman. When he landed at St. Domingo in one thousand five hundred and four, his reception was such as equalled his most sanguine hopes, and he was employed by the governor in several honourable and lucrative stations. These however did not satisfy his ambition; and in the year one thousand five hundred and eleven, he obtained permission to accompany Diego Velasquez in his expedition to Cuba. In this service he distinguished himself so much, that, notwithstanding some violent contests with Velasquez, occasioned by trivial events, unworthy of remembrance, he was at length taken into favour, and received an ample concession of lands and of Indians, the recompence usually bestowed upon adventurers in the New World [d].

Though Cortes had not hitherto acted in high

[c] See NOTE XCVIII.

[d] Gomara, Cron. c. 1, 2, 3.



command, he had displayed such qualities in several scenes of difficulty and danger, as raised universal expectation, and turned the eyes of his countrymen towards him, as one capable of performing great things. The turbulence of youth, as soon as he found objects and occupations suited to the ardour of his mind, gradually subsided, and settled into a habit of regular indefatigable activity. The impetuosity of his temper, when he came to act with his equals, insensibly abated, by being kept under restraint, and mellowed into a cordial soldierly frankness. These qualities were accompanied with calm prudence in concerting his schemes, with persevering vigour in executing them, and with what is peculiar to superior genius, the art of gaining the confidence and governing the minds of men. To all which were added, the inferior accomplishments, that strike the vulgar, and command their respect; a graceful person, a winning aspect, extraordinary address in martial exercises, and a constitution of such vigour as to be capable of enduring any fatigue.

As soon as Cortes was mentioned to Velasquez by his two confidants, he flattered himself that he had at length found what he had hitherto sought in vain, a man with talents for command, but not an object for jealousy. Neither the rank nor the fortune of Cortes, as he imagined, were such that he could aspire at independence. He had reason to believe that by his own readiness to bury ancient animosities in oblivion, as well as his liberality in conferring several recent favours, he had already gained the good-will of Cortes, and hoped, by this new and unexpected mark of confidence, that he might attach him for ever to his interest.

Cortes, receiving his commission [Oct. 23,] with the warmest expressions of respect and gratitude to the governor, immediately erected his standard before his own house, appeared in a military dress, and

assumed all the ensigns of his new dignity. His utmost influence and activity were exerted in persuading many of his friends to engage in the service, and in urging forward the preparations for the voyage. All his own funds, together with what money he could raise by mortgaging his lands and Indians, were expended in purchasing military stores and provisions, or in supplying the wants of such of his officers, as were unable to equip themselves in a manner suited to their rank [*e*]. Inoffensive, and even laudable as this conduct was, his disappointed competitors were malicious enough to give it a turn to his disadvantage. They represented him as aiming already, with little disguise, at establishing an independent authority over his troops, and endeavouring to secure their respect or love by his ostentatious and interested liberality. They reminded Velasquez of his former dissensions with the man in whom he now reposed so much confidence, and foretold that Cortes would be more apt to avail himself of the power, which the governor was inconsiderately putting in his hands, to avenge past injuries, than to requite recent obligations. These insinuations made such impression upon the suspicious mind of Velasquez, that Cortes soon observed some symptoms of a growing alienation and distrust in his behaviour, and was advised by Lares and Duero, to hasten his departure, before these should become so confirmed, as to break out with open violence. Fully sensible of this danger, he urged forward his preparations with such rapidity, that he set sail from St. Jago de Cuba on the eighteenth of November, Velasquez accompanying him to the shore, and taking leave of him with an appearance of perfect friendship and confidence, though he had secretly given it in charge to some of Cortes' officers, to keep a watchful eye upon every part of their commander's conduct [*f*].

[*e*] See NOTE XCIX. [*f*] Gomara, Cron. c. 7. B. Diaz. c. 20.

Cortes proceeded to Trinidad, a small settlement on the same side of the island, where he was joined by several adventurers, and received a supply of provisions and military stores, of which his stock was still very incomplete. He had hardly left St. Jago, when the jealousy which had been working in the breast of Velasquez, grew so violent, that it was impossible to suppress it. The armament was no longer under his own eye and direction; and he felt, that as his power over it ceased, that of Cortes would become more absolute. Imagination now aggravated every circumstance which had formerly excited suspicion: the rivals of Cortes industriously threw in reflections which increased his fears; and with no less art than malice they called superstition to their aid, employing the predictions of an astrologer in order to complete the alarm. All these, by their united operation, produced the desired effect. Velasquez repented bitterly of his own imprudence, in having committed a trust of so much importance to a person whose fidelity appeared so doubtful, and hastily dispatched instructions to Trinidad, empowering Verdugo, the chief magistrate there, to deprive Cortes of his commission. But Cortes had already made such progress in gaining the esteem and confidence of his troops, that, finding officers as well as soldiers equally zealous to support his authority, he soothed or intimidated Verdugo, and was permitted to depart from Trinidad without molestation.

From Trinidad Cortes sailed for the Havana, in order to raise more soldiers, and to complete the victualling of his fleet. There several persons of distinction entered into the service, and engaged to supply what provisions were still wanting; but as it was necessary to allow them some time for performing what they had promised, Velasquez, sensible that he ought no longer to rely on a man of whom he

had so openly discovered his distrust, availed himself of the interval, which this unavoidable delay afforded, in order to make one attempt more to wrest the command out of the hands of Cortes. He loudly complained of Verdugo's conduct, accusing him either of childish facility, or of manifest treachery, in suffering Cortes to escape from Trinidad. Anxious to guard against a second disappointment, he sent a person of confidence to the Havana, with peremptory injunctions to Pedro Barba, his lieutenant-governor in that colony, instantly to arrest Cortes, to send him prisoner to St. Jago under a strong guard, and to countermand the sailing of the armament until he should receive farther orders. He wrote likewise to the principal officers, requiring them to assist Barba in executing what he had given him in charge. But before the arrival of his messenger, a Franciscan friar of St. Jago had secretly conveyed an account of this interesting transaction to Bartholomew de Olmedo, a monk of the same order, who acted as chaplain to the expedition.

Cortes, forewarned of the danger, had time to take precautions for his own safety. His first step was to find some pretext for removing from the Havana Diego de Ordaz, an officer of great merit, but in whom, on account of his known attachment to Velasquez, he could not confide in this trying and delicate juncture. He gave him the command of a vessel, destined to take on board some provisions in a small harbour beyond Cape Antonio, and thus made sure of his absence, without seeming to suspect his fidelity. When he was gone, Cortes no longer concealed the intentions of Velasquez from his troops; and as officers and soldiers were equally impatient to set out on an expedition, in preparing for which most of them had expended all their fortunes, they expressed their astonishment and indignation at that illiberal jealousy to which the governor was

about to sacrifice, not only the honour of their general, but all their sanguine hopes of glory and wealth. With one voice they entreated that he would not abandon the important station to which he had such a good title. They conjured him not to deprive them of a leader whom they followed with such well-founded confidence, and offered to shed the last drop of their blood in maintaining his authority. Cortes was easily induced to comply with what he himself so ardently desired. He swore that he would never desert soldiers who had given him such a signal proof of their attachment, and promised instantly to conduct them to that rich country, which had been so long the object of their thoughts and wishes. This declaration was received with transports of military applause, accompanied with threats and imprecations against all who should presume to call in question the jurisdiction of their general, or to obstruct the execution of his designs.

Every thing was now ready for their departure; but though this expedition was fitted out by the united effort of the Spanish power in Cuba; though every settlement had contributed its quota of men and provisions; though the governor had laid out considerable sums, and each adventurer had exhausted his stock, or strained his credit, the poverty of the preparations was such as must astonish the present age, and bore, indeed, no resemblance to an armament destined for the conquest of a great empire. The fleet consisted of eleven vessels; the largest of a hundred tons, which was dignified by the name of Admiral; three of seventy or eighty tons, and the rest small open barks. On board of these were six hundred and seventeen men; of which five hundred and eight belonged to the land service, and a hundred and nine were seamen or artificers. The soldiers were divided into eleven companies, according to the number of the ships; to each of which Cortes

appointed a captain, and committed to him the command of the vessel while at sea, and of the men when on shore [g]. As the use of fire-arms among the nations of Europe was hitherto confined to a few battalions of regularly disciplined infantry, only thirteen soldiers were armed with muskets, thirty-two were cross-bow men, and the rest had swords and spears. Instead of the usual defensive armour, which must have been cumbersome in a hot climate, the soldiers wore jackets quilted with cotton, which experience had taught the Spaniards to be a sufficient protection against the weapons of the Americans. They had only sixteen horses, ten small field pieces, and four falconets [h].

With this slender and ill-provided train did Cortes set sail [Feb. 10, 1519], to make war upon a monarch whose dominions were more extensive than all the kingdoms subject to the Spanish crown. As religious enthusiasm always mingled with the spirit of adventure in the New World, and, by a combination still more strange, united with avarice, in prompting the Spaniards to all their enterprises, a large cross was displayed in their standards, with this inscription, *Let us follow the cross, for under this sign we shall conquer.*

So powerfully were Cortes and his followers animated with both these passions, that no less eager to plunder the opulent country whether they were bound, than zealous to propagate the Christian faith among its inhabitants, they set out, not with the solicitude natural to men going upon dangerous services, but with that confidence which arises from security of success, and certainty of the divine protection.

As Cortes had determined to touch at every place where Grijalva had visited, he steered directly towards the island of Cozumel: there he had the

[g] See NOTE C.

[h] B. Diaz. c. 19.

good fortune to redeem Jerome de Aguilar, a Spaniard, who had been eight years a prisoner among the Indians. This man was perfectly acquainted with a dialect of their language, understood through a large extent of country, and possessing besides a considerable share of prudence and sagacity, proved extremely useful as an interpreter. From Cozumel, Cortes proceeded to the river of Tabasco [March 4], in hopes of a reception as friendly as Grijalva had met with there, and of finding gold in the same abundance; but the disposition of the natives, from some unknown cause, was totally changed. After repeated endeavours to conciliate their good-will, he was constrained to have recourse to violence. Though the forces of the enemy were numerous, and advanced with extraordinary courage, they were routed with great slaughter, in several successive actions. The loss which they sustained, and still more the astonishment and terror excited by the destructive effect of the fire-arms, and the dreadful appearance of the horses, humbled their fierce spirits, and induced them to sue for peace. They acknowledged the king of Castile as their sovereign, and granted Cortes a supply of provisions, with a present of cotton garments, some gold, and twenty female slaves [i].

Cortes continued his course to the westward, keeping as near the shore as possible, in order to observe the country; but could discover no proper place for landing, until he arrived at St. Juan de Ulua [k]. As he entered this harbour [April 2], a large canoe, full of people, among whom were two who seemed to be persons of distinction, approached his ship with signs of peace and amity. They came on board without fear or distrust, and addressed him in a most respectful manner, but in a language

[i] See NOTE CI. [k] B. Diaz. c. 31—36. Gomara, Cron. c. 18—23. Herrera, dec. 2. lib. iv. c. 11, &c.

ther unknown to Aguilar. Cortes was in the  
 t perplexity and distress, at an event of which  
 antly foresaw all the consequences, and already  
 e hesitation and uncertainty with which he  
 carry on the great schemes which he medi-  
 if, in his transactions with the natives, he must  
 d entirely upon such an imperfect, ambiguous,  
 onjectural mode of communication, as the use  
 is. But he did not remain long in his embar-  
 g situation: a fortunate accident extricated  
 when his own sagacity could have contributed  
 owards his relief. One of the female slaves,  
 he had received from the cazique of Tobasco,  
 ed to be present at the first interview between  
 and his new guests. She perceived his dis-  
 as well as the confusion of Aguilar; and as  
 rfectly understood the Mexican language, she  
 ned what they said in the Yucatan tongue, with  
 Aguilar was acquainted. This woman, known  
 ards by the name of Donna Marina, and who  
 a conspicuous figure in the history of the New  
 l, where great revolutions were brought about  
 all causes and inconsiderable instruments, was  
 n one of the provinces of the Mexican empire.  
 g been sold as a slave in the early part of her  
 ter a variety of adventures she fell into the  
 of the Tabascans, and had resided long enough  
 g them to acquire their language, without  
 the use of her own. Though it was both  
 s and troublesome to converse by the inter-  
 n of two different interpreters, Cortes was so  
 pleased with having discovered this method  
 rying on some intercourse with the people of  
 try into which he was determined to penetrate,  
 n the transports of his joy he considered it as  
 le interposition of Providence in his favour [1].

3. Diaz. c. 37, 38, 39. Gomara, Cron. c. 25, 26. Her-  
 :c. 2. lib. v. c. 4.

.. I. NO. 6.

C C



He now learned, that the two persons whom he had received on board of his ship were deputies from Teutile and Pilpatoe, two officers entrusted with the government of that province, by a great monarch, whom they called Montezuma; and that they were sent to inquire what his intentions were in visiting their coast, and to offer him what assistance he might need, in order to continue his voyage. Cortes, struck with the appearance of those people, as well as the tenor of the message, assured them, in respectful terms, that he approached their country with most friendly sentiments, and came to propose matters of great importance to the welfare of their prince and his kingdom, which he would unfold more fully, in person, to the governor and the general. Next morning, without waiting for any answer, he landed his troops, his horses, and artillery; and having chosen proper ground, began to erect huts for his men, and to fortify his camp. The natives, instead of opposing the entrance of those fatal guests into their country, assisted them in all their operations, with an alacrity of which they had ere long good reason to repent.

Next day Teutile and Pilpatoe entered the Spanish camp with a numerous retinue, and Cortes considering them as the ministers of a great monarch, entitled to a degree of attention very different from that which the Spaniards were accustomed to pay to the petty caziques, with whom they had intercourse in the isles, received them with much formal ceremony. He informed them, that he came as ambassador from Don Carlos of Austria, king of Castile, the greatest monarch of the East, and was intrusted with propositions of such moment, that he could impart them to none but the emperor Montezuma himself, and therefore required them to conduct him, without loss of time, into the presence of their master. The Mexican officers could not conceal their uneasiness

a request which they knew would be disagreeable, and which they foresaw might prove extremely embarrassing to their sovereign, whose mind had been filled with many disquieting apprehensions, ever since the former appearance of the Spaniards on his coasts. But before they attempted to dissuade Cortes from persisting on this demand, they endeavoured to conciliate his good will, by intreating him to accept of certain presents, which, as humble slaves of Montezuma, they laid at his feet. They were introduced with great parade, and consisted of fine cotton cloth, plumes of various colours, and of ornaments of gold and silver, to a considerable value; the workmanship of which appeared to be as curious as the materials were rich. The display of these produced an effect very different from what the Mexicans intended. Instead of satisfying, it increased the avidity of the Spaniards, and rendered them so eager and impatient to become masters of a country which was surrounded with such precious productions, that Cortes could hardly listen with patience to the arguments which Pilpatoe and Teutile employed to dissuade him from visiting the capital, and in a haughty determined tone he insisted on his demand, of being admitted to a personal audience of their sovereign. During this interview, some painters, in the train of the Mexican chiefs, had been diligently employed in delineating, upon white cotton cloths, figures of the ships, the horses, the artillery, the soldiers, and whatever else attracted their eyes, as singular. When Cortes observed this, and was informed that these pictures were to be sent to Montezuma, in order to convey to him a more lively idea of the strange and wonderful objects now presented to his view, than any words could communicate, he resolved to render the representation still more animated and interesting, by exhibiting such a spectacle which might give both them and their monarch an

awful impression of the extraordinary prowess of his followers, and the irresistible force of their arms. The trumpets, by his order, sounded an alarm ; the troops, in a moment, formed in order of battle, the infantry performed such martial exercises as were best suited to display the effect of their different weapons ; the horse, in various evolutions, gave a specimen of their agility and strength ; the artillery, pointed towards the thick woods which surrounded the camp, were fired, and made dreadful havoc among the trees. The Mexicans looked on with that silent amazement which is natural when the mind is struck with objects, which are both awful and above its comprehension. But, at the explosion of the cannon, many of them fled, some fell to the ground, and all were so much confounded at the sight of men whose power so nearly resembled that of the gods, that Cortes found it difficult to compose and re-assure them. The painters had now many new objects on which to exercise their art, and they put their fancy on the stretch in order to invent figures and symbols to represent the extraordinary things which they had seen.

Messengers were immediately dispatched to Montezuma, with those pictures, and a full account of every thing that had passed since the arrival of the Spaniards, and by them Cortes sent a present of some European curiosities to Montezuma, which, though of no great value, he believed would be acceptable on account of their novelty. The Mexican monarchs, in order to obtain early information of every occurrence in all the corners of their extensive empire, had introduced a refinement in police, unknown, at that time in Europe. They had couriers posted at proper stations along the principal roads ; and as these were trained to agility by a regular education, and relieved one another at moderate distances, they conveyed intelligence with surprising

rapidity. Though the capital in which Montezuma resided was above a hundred and eighty miles from St. Juan de Ulua, Cortes' presents were carried thither, and an answer to his demands was received in a few days. The same officers who had hitherto treated with the Spaniards, were employed to deliver this answer; but as they knew how repugnant the determination of their master was to all the schemes and wishes of the Spanish commander, they would not venture to make it known until they had previously endeavoured to sooth and mollify him. For this purpose, they renewed their negotiation, by introducing a train of a hundred Indians, loaded with presents sent to him by Montezuma. The magnificence of these was such as became a great monarch, and far exceeded any idea which the Spaniards had hitherto formed of his wealth. They were placed on mats spread on the ground, in such order, as shewed them to the greatest advantage. Cortes and his officers viewed, with admiration, the various manufactures of the country, cotton stuffs so fine, and of such delicate texture, as to resemble silk; pictures of animals, trees, and other natural objects, formed with feathers of different colours, disposed and mingled with such skill and elegance, as to rival the works of the pencil in truth and beauty of imitation. But what chiefly attracted their eyes, were two large plates of a circular form, one of massive gold representing the sun, the other of silver, an emblem of the moon [m]. These were accompanied with bracelets, collars, rings, and other trinkets of gold; and that nothing might be wanting which could give the Spaniards a complete idea of what the country afforded, with some boxes filled with pearls, precious stones, and grains of gold unwrought, as they had been found in the mines or rivers. Cortes received all these with an appearance of profound

[m] See NOTE CII.

veneration for the monarch by whom they were bestowed. But when the Mexicans, presuming upon this, informed him, that their master, though he desired him to accept of what he had sent as a token of regard for that monarch whom Cortes represented, would not give his consent that foreign troops should approach nearer to his capital, or even allow them to continue longer in his dominions, the Spanish general declared, in a manner more resolute and peremptory than formerly, that he must insist on his first demand, as he could not without dishonour, return to his own country, until he was admitted into the presence of the prince whom he was appointed to visit in the name of his sovereign. The Mexicans, astonished at seeing any man dare to oppose that will, which they were accustomed to consider as supreme and irresistible, yet afraid of precipitating their country into an open rupture with such formidable enemies, prevailed with Cortes to promise, that he would not move from his present camp, until the return of a messenger, whom they had sent to Montezuma for farther instructions [n].

The firmness with which Cortes adhered to his original proposal, should naturally have brought the negotiation between him and Montezuma to a speedy issue, as it seemed to leave the Mexican monarch no choice, but either to receive him with confidence as a friend, or to oppose him openly as an enemy. The latter was what might have been expected from a haughty prince in possession of extensive power. The mexican empire, at this period, was at a pitch of grandeur to which no society ever attained in so short a period. Though it had subsisted, according to their own traditions, only a hundred and thirty years, its dominion extended from the North to the South Sea, over territories stretching, with some

[n] B. Diaz. c. 39. Gomara, Cron. c. 27. Herrera, dec. 2. lib. v. c. 5, 6.

small interruption, above five hundred leagues from east to west, and more than two hundred from north to south, comprehending provinces not inferior in fertility, population, and opulence, to any in the torrid zone. The people were warlike and enterprising; the authority of the monarch unbounded, and his revenues considerable. If, with the forces which might have been suddenly assembled in such an empire, Montezuma had fallen upon the Spaniards while encamped on a barren unhealthy coast, unsupported by any ally, without a place of retreat, and destitute of provisions, it seems to be impossible, even with all the advantages of their superior discipline and arms, that they could have stood the shock, and they must either have perished in such an unequal contest, or have abandoned the enterprise.

As the power of Montezuma enabled him to take this spirited part, his own dispositions were such as seemed naturally to prompt him to it. Of all the princes who had swayed the Mexican sceptre, he was the most haughty, the most violent, and the most impatient of control. His subjects looked up to him with awe, and his enemies with terror. The former he governed with unexampled rigour, but they were impressed with such an opinion of his capacity, as commanded their respect; and, by many victories over the latter, he had spread far the dread of his arms, and had added several considerable provinces to his dominions. But though his talents might be suited to the transactions of a state so imperfectly polished as the Mexican empire, and sufficient to conduct them while in their accustomed course, they were altogether inadequate to a conjuncture so extraordinary, and did not qualify him either to judge with the discernment, or to act with the decision, requisite in such trying emergence.

From the moment that the Spaniards appeared on his coast, he discovered symptoms of timidity and

embarrassment. Instead of taking such resolutions as the consciousness of his own power, or the memory of his former exploits, might have inspired, he deliberated with an anxiety and hesitation which did not escape the notice of his meanest courtiers. The perplexity and discomposure of Montezuma's mind upon this occasion, as well as the general dismay of his subjects, were not owing wholly to the impression which the Spaniards had made by the novelty of their appearance and the terror of their arms. Its origin may be traced up to a more remote source. There was an opinion, if we may believe the earliest and most authentic Spanish historians, almost universal among the Americans, that some dreadful calamity was impending over their heads, from a race of formidable invaders who should come from regions towards the rising sun, to overrun and desolate their country. Whether this disquieting apprehension flowed from the memory of some natural calamity which had afflicted that part of the globe, and impressed the minds of the inhabitants with superstitious fears and forebodings, or whether it was an imagination accidentally suggested by the astonishment which the first sight of a new race of men occasioned, it is impossible to determine. But as the Mexicans were more prone to superstition than any people in the New World, they were more deeply affected by the appearance of the Spaniards, whom their credulity instantly represented as the instrument destined to bring about this fatal revolution which they dreaded. Under those circumstances, it ceases to be incredible that a handful of adventurers should alarm the monarch of a great empire, and all his subjects [o].

Notwithstanding the influence of this impression, when the messenger arrived from the Spanish camp

[o] Cortes, *relatione Secunda*, ap. Ramus. iii. 234, 235. Herrera, dec. 2. lib. iii. c. 1. lib. 5. c. 11. lib. vii. c. 6. Gomara, *Cron.* c. 66, 92, 144.

with an account that the leader of the strangers, adhering to his original demand, refused to obey the order enjoining him to leave the country, Montezuma assumed some degree of resolution, and, in a transport of rage natural to a fierce prince unaccustomed to meet with any opposition to his will, he threatened to sacrifice those presumptuous men to his gods. But his doubts and fears quickly returned, and instead of issuing orders to carry his threats into execution, he again called his ministers to confer and offer their advice. Feeble and temporising measures will always be the result when men assemble to deliberate in a situation where they ought to act. The Mexican counsellors took no effectual measure for expelling such troublesome intruders, and were satisfied with issuing a more positive injunction, requiring them to leave the country ; but this they preposterously accompanied with a present of such value, as proved fresh inducement to remain there.

Meanwhile, the Spaniards were not without solicitude or a variety of sentiments, in deliberating concerning their own future conduct. From what they had already seen, many of them formed such extravagant ideas concerning the opulence of the country, that despising danger or hardships, when they had in view treasures which appeared to be inexhaustible, they were eager to attempt the conquest. Others, estimating the power of the Mexican empire by its wealth, and enumerating the various proofs which had occurred of its being under a well-regulated administration, contended, that it would be an act of the wildest frenzy to attack such a state with a small body of men, in want of provisions, unconnected with any ally, and already enfeebled by the diseases peculiar to the climate, and the loss of several of their number [p]. Cortes secretly applauded the advocates for bold measures, and cherished their roman-

[p] B. Diaz. c. 40.



tic hopes, as such ideas corresponded with his own, and favoured the execution of the schemes which he had formed. From the time that the suspicions of Velasquez broke out with open violence in the attempts to deprive him of the command, Cortes saw the necessity of dissolving a connection which would obstruct and embarrass all his operations, and watched for a proper opportunity of coming to a final rupture with him. Having this in view, he had laboured by every art to secure the esteem and affection of his soldiers. With his abilities for command, it was easy to gain their esteem; and his followers were quickly satisfied that they might rely, with perfect confidence, on the conduct and courage of their leader. Nor was it more difficult to acquire their affection. Among adventurers, nearly of the same rank, and serving at their own expence, the dignity of command did not elevate a general above mingling with those who acted under him. Cortes availed himself of this freedom of intercourse, to insinuate himself into their favour, and by his affable manners, by well-timed acts of liberality to some, by inspiring all with vast hopes, and by allowing them to trade privately with the natives [q], he attached the greater part of his soldiers so firmly to himself, that they almost forgot that the armament had been fitted out by the authority, and at the expence, of another.

During those intrigues, Teutile arrived with the present from Montezuma, and, together with it, delivered the ultimate order of that monarch to depart instantly out of his dominions; and when Cortes, instead of complying, renewed his request of an audience, the Mexican turned from him abruptly, and quitted the camp with looks and gestures which strongly expressed his surprise and resentment. Next morning, none of the natives, who used to frequent

[q] See NOTE CIII.

the camp in great numbers, in order to barter with the soldiers, and to bring in provisions, appeared. All friendly correspondence seemed now to be at an end, and it was expected every moment that hostilities would commence. This, though an event that might have been foreseen, occasioned a sudden consternation among the Spaniards, which emboldened the adherents of Velasquez not only to murmur and cabal against their general, but to appoint one of their number to remonstrate openly against his imprudence in attempting the conquest of a mighty empire with such inadequate force, and to urge the necessity of returning to Cuba, in order to refit the fleet and augment the army. Diego de Ordaz, one of his principal officers, whom the malecontents charged with this commission, delivered it with a soldierly freedom and bluntness, assuring Cortes that he spoke the sentiments of the whole army. He listened to this remonstrance without any appearance of emotion, and as he well knew the temper and wishes of his soldiers, and foresaw how they would receive a proposition fatal at once to all the splendid hopes and schemes which they had been forming with such complacency, he carried his dissimulation so far as to seem to relinquish his own measures in compliance with the request of Ordaz, and issued orders that the army should be in readiness next day to re-imbark for Cuba. As soon as this was known, the disappointed adventurers exclaimed and threatened; the emissaries of Cortes, mingling with them, inflamed their rage; the ferment became general; the whole camp was almost in open mutiny; all demanding with eagerness to see their commander. Cortes was not slow in appearing; when, with one voice, officers and soldiers expressed their astonishment and indignation at the orders which they had received. It was unworthy, they cried, of the Castilian courage, to be daunted at the first aspect of

danger, and infamous to fly before any enemy appeared. For their parts, they were determined not to relinquish an enterprise, that had hitherto been successful, and which tended so visibly to spread the knowledge of true religion, and to advance the glory and interest of their country. Happy under his command, they would follow him with alacrity through every danger, in quest of those settlements and treasures which he had so long held out to their view ; but if he chose rather to return to Cuba, and tamely give up all his hopes of distinction and opulence to an envious rival, they would instantly choose another general to conduct them in that path of glory, which he had not spirit to enter.

Cortes, delighted with their ardour, took no offence at the boldness with which it was uttered. The sentiments were what he himself had inspired, and the warmth of expression satisfied him that his followers had imbibed them thoroughly. He affected however, to be surprised at what he heard, declaring that his orders to prepare for embarking were issued from a persuasion that this was agreeable to his troops ; that, from deference to what he had been informed was their inclination, he had sacrificed his own private opinion, which was firmly bent on establishing immediately a settlement on the sea-coast, and then on endeavouring to penetrate into the interior part of the country ; that now he was convinced of his error ; and as he perceived that they were animated with the generous spirit which breathed in every true Spaniard, he would resume, with fresh ardour, his original plan of operation, and doubted not to conduct them, in the career of victory, to such independent fortunes as their valour merited. Upon this declaration, shouts of applause testified the excess of their joy. The measure seemed to be taken with unanimous consent ; such as secretly condemned it being obliged to join in the acclama-

tions, partly to conceal their disaffection from their general, and partly to avoid the imputation of cowardice from their fellow-soldiers [r].

Without allowing his men time to cool or to reflect, Cortes set about carrying his design into execution. In order to give a beginning to a colony, he assembled the principal persons in his army, and by their suffrage elected a council and magistrates in whom the government was to be vested. As men naturally transplant the institutions and forms of the mother-country into their new settlements, this was framed upon the model of a Spanish corporation. The magistrates were distinguished by the same names and ensigns of office, and were to exercise a similar jurisdiction. All the persons chosen were most firmly devoted to Cortes, and the instrument of their election was framed in the king's name, without any mention of their dependence on Velasquez. The two principles of avarice and enthusiasm, which prompted the Spaniards to all their enterprises in the New World, seem to have concurred in suggesting the name which Cortes bestowed on his infant settlement. He called it, *The rich town of the true Cross* [s].

The first meeting of the new council was distinguished by a transaction of great moment. As soon as it assembled, Cortes applied for leave to enter; and approaching with many marks of profound respect, which added dignity to the tribunal, and set an example of reverence for its authority, he began a long harangue, in which, with much art, and in terms extremely flattering to persons just entering upon their new function, he observed, that as the supreme jurisdiction over the colony which they had planted was now vested in this court, he considered them as clothed with the authority, and representing

[r] B. Diaz. c. 40, 41, 42. Herrera, dec. 2. lib. v. c. 6, 7.

[s] Villa rica de la vera Cruz.

the person of their sovereign ; that accordingly he would communicate to them what he deemed essential to the public safety, with the same dutiful fidelity as if he were addressing his royal master ; that the security of a colony settled in a great empire, whose sovereign had already discovered his hostile intentions, depended upon arms, and the efficacy of these upon the subordination and discipline preserved among the troops ; that his right to command was derived from a commission granted by the governor of Cuba ; and as that had been long since revoked, the lawfulness of his jurisdiction might well be questioned ; that he might be thought to act upon a defective, or even a dubious title ; nor could they trust an army which might dispute the powers of its general, at a juncture when it ought implicitly to obey his orders ; that, moved by these considerations, he now resigned all his authority to them, that they, having both right to choose, and power to confer full jurisdiction, might appoint one, in the king's name, to command the army in its future operations ; and as for his own part, such was his zeal for the service in which they were engaged, that he would most cheerfully take up a pike with the same hand that laid down the general's truncheon, and convince his fellow-soldiers, that though accustomed to command, he had not forgotten how to obey. Having finished his discourse, he laid the commission from Velasquez upon the table, and after kissing his truncheon, delivered it to the chief magistrate, and withdrew.

The deliberations of the council were not long, as Cortes had concerted this important measure with his confidants, and had prepared the other members with great address, for the part which he wished them to take. His resignation was accepted ; and as the uninterrupted tenor of their prosperity under his conduct afforded the most satisfying evidence of

his abilities for command, they, by their unanimous suffrage, elected him chief justice of the colony, and captain-general of its army, and appointed his commission to be made out in the king's name, with most ample powers, which were to continue in force until the royal pleasure should be farther known. That this deed might not be deemed the machination of a junto, the council called together the troops, and acquainted them with what had been resolved. The soldiers, with eager applause, ratified the choice which the council had made; the air resounded with the name of Cortes, and all vowed to shed their blood in support of his authority.

Cortes having now brought his intrigues to the desired issue, and shaken off his mortifying dependence on the governor of Cuba, accepted of the commission which vested in him supreme jurisdiction, civil as well as military, over the colony, with many professions of respect to the council, and gratitude to the army. Together with his new command, he assumed greater dignity, and began to exercise more extensive powers. Formerly he had felt himself to be only the deputy of a subject; now he acted as the representative of his sovereign. The adherents of Velasquez, fully aware of what would be the effect of this change in the situation of Cortes, could no longer continue silent and passive spectators of his actions. They exclaimed openly against the proceedings of the council as illegal, and against those of the army as mutinous. Cortes, instantly perceiving the necessity of giving a timely check to such seditious discourse by some vigorous measure, arrested Ordaz, Escudero, and Velasquez de Leon, the ringleaders of this faction, and sent them prisoners aboard the fleet, loaded with chains. Their dependents, astonished and overawed, remained quiet; and Cortes, more desirous to reclaim than to punish his prisoners, who were officers of great merit, courted their friendship

with such assiduity and address, that the reconciliation was perfectly cordial; and, on the most trying occasions, neither their connection with the governor of Cuba, nor the memory of the indignity with which they had been treated, tempted them to swerve from an inviolable attachment to his interest [1]. In this, as well as his other negotiations at this critical conjuncture, which decided with respect to his future fame and fortune, Cortes owed much of his success to the Mexican gold, which he distributed with a liberal hand both among his friends and his opponents [2].

Cortes, having thus rendered the union between himself and his army indissoluble, by engaging it to join him in disclaiming any dependence on the governor of Cuba, and in repeated acts of disobedience to his authority, thought he might now venture to quit the camp in which he had hitherto remained, and advance into the country. To this he was encouraged by an event no less fortunate than seasonable. Some Indians having approached his camp in a mysterious manner, were introduced into his presence. He found that they were sent with a proffer of friendship from the cazique of Zempoalla, a considerable town at no great distance; and from their answers to a variety of questions which he put to them, according to his usual practice in every interview with the people of the country, he gathered, that their master, though subject to the Mexican empire, was impatient of the yoke, and filled with such dread and hatred of Montezuma, that nothing could be more acceptable to him than any prospect of deliverance from the oppression under which he groaned. On hearing this, a ray of light and hope broke in upon the mind of Cortes. He saw that the great empire which he intended to attack was neither

[1] B. Diaz. c. 42, 43. Gomara, Cron. c. 30, 31. Herrera, dec. 2. lib. v. c. 7.

[2] B. Diaz. c. 44.

perfectly united, nor its sovereign universally beloved. He concluded, that the causes of disaffection could not be confined to one province, but that in other corners there must be malecontents, so weary of subjection, or so desirous of change, as to be ready to follow the standard of any protector. Full of those ideas, on which he began to form a scheme, that time, and more perfect information concerning the state of the country, enabled him to mature, he gave a most gracious reception to the Zempoallans, and promised soon to visit their cazique [u].

In order to perform this promise, it was not necessary to vary the route which he had already fixed for his march. Some officers, whom he had employed to survey the coast, having discovered a village named Quiabisan, about forty miles to the northward, which, both on account of the fertility of the soil, and commodiousness of the harbour, seemed to be a more proper station for a settlement than that where he was encamped, Cortes determined to remove thither. Zempoalla lay in his way, where the cazique received him in the manner which he had reason to expect; with gifts and caresses, like a man solicitous to gain his good-will; with respect approaching almost to adoration, like one who looked up to him as a deliverer. From him he learned many particulars with respect to the character of Montezuma, and the circumstances which rendered his dominion odious. He was a tyrant, as the cazique told him with tears, haughty, cruel, and suspicious; who treated his own subjects with arrogance, ruined the conquered provinces by excessive exactions, and often tore their sons and daughters from them by violence; the former to be offered as victims to his gods; the latter to be reserved as concubines for himself or favourites. Cortes, in reply to him, artfully insinuated, that one great object of the Spaniards

[u] B. Diaz. c. 41. Gomara, Cron. c. 28.



in visiting a country so remote from their own, was to redress grievances, and to relieve the oppressed; and having encouraged him to hope for this interposition in due time, he continued his march to Quiabisan.

The spot which his officers had recommended as a proper situation, appeared to him to be so well chosen, that he immediately marked out ground for a town. The houses to be erected were only huts; but these were to be surrounded with fortifications, of sufficient strength to resist the assaults of an Indian army. As the finishing of those fortifications was essential to the existence of a colony, and of no less importance in prosecuting the designs which the leader and his followers meditated, both in order to secure a place of retreat, and to preserve their communication with the sea, every man in the army, officers as well as soldiers, put his hand to the work, Cortes himself setting them an example of activity and perseverance in labour. The Indians of Zempoalla and Quiabisan lent their aid; and this petty station, the parent of so many mighty settlements, was soon in a state of defence [x].

While engaged in this necessary work, Cortes had several interviews with the caziques of Zempoalla and Quiabisan; and availing himself of their wonder and astonishment at the new objects which they daily beheld, he gradually inspired them with such an high opinion of the Spaniards, as beings of a superior order, and irresistible in arms, that, relying on their protection, they ventured to insult the Mexican power, at the very name of which they were accustomed to tremble. Some of Montezuma's officers having appeared to levy the usual tribute, and to demand a certain number of human victims, as an expiation for their guilt in presuming to hold in-

[x] B. Diaz. c. 45, 46, 48. Gomara, Cron. c. 32, 33, 37. Herrera, dec. 2. lib. v. c. 8, 9.

tercourse with those strangers whom the emperor had commanded to leave his dominions, instead of obeying the order, the caziques made them prisoners, treated them with great indignity, and, as their superstition was no less barbarous than that of the Mexicans, they prepared to sacrifice them to their gods. From this last danger they were delivered by the interposition of Cortes, who manifested the utmost horror at the mention of such a deed. The two caziques having now been pushed to an act of such open rebellion, as left them no hope of safety but in attaching themselves inviolably to the Spaniards, they soon completed their union with them, by formally acknowledging themselves to be vassals of the same monarch. Their example was followed by the Totonagues, a fierce people who inhabited the mountainous part of the country. They willingly subjected themselves to the crown of Castile, and offered to accompany Cortes, with all their forces, in his march towards Mexico [*y*].

Cortes had now been above three months in New Spain; and though this period had not been distinguished by martial exploits, every moment had been employed in operations, which, though less splendid, were more important. By his address in conducting his intrigues with his own army, as well as his sagacity in carrying on his negotiations with the natives, he had already laid the foundations of his future success. But whatever confidence he might place in the plan which he had formed, he could not but perceive, that as his title to command was derived from a doubtful authority, he held it by a precarious tenure. The injuries which Velasquez had received, were such as would naturally prompt him to apply for redress to their common sovereign; and such a representation, he foresaw, might be given of his conduct, that

[*y*] B. Diaz. c. 47. Gomara, Cron. c. 35, 36. Herrera, dec. 2. lib. v. c. 9, 10, 11.

he had reason to apprehend, not only that he might be degraded from his present rank, but subjected to punishment. Before he began his march, it was necessary to take the most effectual precautions against this impending danger. With this view he persuaded the magistrates of the colony at Vera Cruz to address a letter to the king, the chief object of which was to justify their own conduct in establishing a colony independent on the jurisdiction of Velasquez. In order to accomplish this, they endeavoured to detract from his merit, in fitting out the two former armaments under Cordova and Grijalva, affirming that these had been equipped by the adventurers who engaged in the expeditions, and not by the governor. They contended that the sole object of Velasquez was to trade or barter with the natives, not to attempt the conquest of New Spain, or to settle a colony there. They asserted that Cortes and the officers who served under him had defrayed the greater part of the expence in fitting out the armament. On this account, they humbly requested their sovereign to ratify what they had done in his name, and to confirm Cortes in the supreme command by his royal commission. That Charles might be induced to grant more readily what they demanded, they gave him a pompous description of the country which they had discovered; of its riches, the number of its inhabitants, their civilization and arts; they related the progress which they had already made in annexing some parts of the country situated on the sea-coast to the crown of Castile; and mention the schemes which they had formed, as well as the hopes which they entertained, of reducing the whole to subjection [z]. Cortes himself wrote in a similar strain;

[z] In this letter it is asserted, that though a considerable number of Spaniards have been wounded in their various encounters with the people of Tabasco, not one of them died, and all had recovered in a very short time. This seems to confirm what I ob-

and as he knew that the Spanish court, accustomed to the exaggerated representations of every new country by its discoverers, would give little credit to their splendid accounts of New Spain, if these were not accompanied with such a specimen of what it contained, as would excite an high idea of its opulence, he solicited his soldiers to relinquish what they might claim as their part of the treasures which had hitherto been collected, in order that the whole might be sent to the king. Such was the ascendant which he had acquired over their minds, and such their own romantic expectations of future wealth, that an army of indigent and rapacious adventurers was capable of this generous effort, and offered to their sovereign the richest present that had hitherto been transmitted from the New World [z]. Portocarrero and Montejo, the chief magistrates of the colony, were appointed to carry this present to Castile, with express orders not to touch at Cuba in their passage thither [a].

While a vessel was preparing for their departure, an unexpected event occasioned a general alarm. Some soldiers and sailors, secretly attached to Velasquez, or intimidated at the prospect of the dangers unavoidable in attempting to penetrate into the heart of a great empire with such unequal force, formed the design of seizing one of the brigantines, and making their escape to Cuba, in order to give the governor such intelligence as might enable him to

served concerning the imperfection of the offensive weapons used by the Americans. In this letter, the human sacrifices offered by the Mexicans to their deities are described minutely, and with great horror; some of the Spaniards, it is said, had been eye witnesses of those barbarous rites. To the letter is subjoined a catalogue and description of the presents sent to the emperor. That published by Gomara, Cron. c. 29, seems to have been copied from it. Pet. Martyr describes many of the articles in his treatise *De insulis nuper inventus*, p. 354, &c.

[z] See NOTE CIV.

[a] B. Diaz. c. 54. Gomara, Cron. c. 40.

intercept the ship which was to carry the treasure and dispatches to Spain. This conspiracy, though formed by persons of low rank, was conducted with profound secrecy ; but at the moment when every thing was ready for execution, they were betrayed by one of their associates.

Though the good fortune of Cortes interposed so seasonably on this occasion, the detection of this conspiracy filled his mind with most disquieting apprehensions, and prompted him to execute a scheme which he had long revolved. He perceived that the spirit of disaffection still lurked among his troops ; that, though hitherto checked by the uniform success of his schemes, or suppressed by the hand of authority, various events might occur which would encourage and call it forth. He observed, that many of his men, weary of the fatigue of service, longed to revisit their settlements in Cuba ; and that upon any appearance of extraordinary danger, or any reverse of fortune, it would be impossible to restrain them from returning thither. He was sensible that his forces, already too feeble, could bear no diminution, and that a very small defection of his followers would oblige him to abandon the enterprise. After ruminating often, and with much solicitude, upon those particulars, he saw no hope of success, but in cutting off all possibility of retreat, and in reducing his men to the necessity of adopting the same resolution with which he himself was animated, either to conquer or to perish. With this view, he determined to destroy his fleet ; but as he durst not venture to execute such a bold resolution by his single authority, he laboured to bring his soldiers to adopt his ideas with respect to the propriety of this measure. His address in accomplishing this was not inferior to the arduous occasion in which it was employed. He persuaded some, that the ships had suffered so much by having been so long at sea, as to be altogether

unfit for service ; to others he pointed out what a seasonable reinforcement of strength they would derive from the junction of an hundred men, now unprofitably employed as sailors ; and to all, he represented the necessity of fixing their eyes and wishes upon what was before them, without allowing the idea of a retreat once to enter their thoughts. With universal consent the ships were drawn ashore, and after stripping them of their sails, rigging, iron works, and whatever else might be of use, they were broke in pieces. Thus, from an effort of magnanimity, to which there is nothing parallel in history, five hundred men voluntarily consented to be shut up in a hostile country, filled with powerful and unknown nations ; and having precluded every means of escape, left themselves without any resource but their own valour and perseverance [b].

Nothing now retarded Cortes ; the alacrity of his troops and the disposition of his allies were equally favourable. All the advantages, however, derived from the latter, though procured by much assiduity and address were well nigh lost in a moment, by an indiscreet sally of religious zeal, which, on many occasions, precipitated Cortes into actions inconsistent with the prudence that distinguishes his character. Though hitherto he had neither time nor opportunity to explain to the natives the errors of their own superstition, or to instruct them in the principles of the Christian faith, he commanded his soldiers to overturn the altars and to destroy the idols in the chief temple of Zempoalla, and in their place to erect a crucifix and an image of the Virgin Mary. The people beheld this with astonishment and horror ; the priests excited them to arms ; but such was the authority of Cortes, and so great the ascendant which the Spaniards had acquired, that the commotion was

[b] Relat. di Cortes. Ramus. iii. 225. B. Diaz. c. 57, 58. Herrera, dec. 2. lib. v. c. 14.

appeased without bloodshed, and concord perfectly re-established [c].

Cortes began his march from Zempoalla on the sixteenth of August, with five hundred men, fifteen horse, and six field-pieces. The rest of his troops, consisting chiefly of such as from age or infirmity were less fit for active service he left as a garrison in Villa Rica, under the command of Escalante, an officer of merit, and warmly attached to his interest. The cazique of Zempoalla supplied him with provisions, and with two hundred of those Indians, called *Tamemes*, whose office, in a country where tame animals were unknown, was to carry burdens, and to perform all servile labour. They were a great relief to the Spanish soldiers, who hitherto had been obliged, not only to carry their own baggage, but to drag along the artillery by main force. He offered likewise a considerable body of his troops, but Cortes was satisfied with four hundred; taking care, however, to choose persons of such note as might prove hostages for the fidelity of their master. Nothing memorable happened in his progress, until he arrived on the confines of Tlascal. The inhabitants of that province, a warlike people, were implacable enemies of the Mexicans, and had been united in an ancient alliance with the caziques of Zempoalla. Though less civilized than the subjects of Montezuma, they were advanced in improvement far beyond the rude nations of America, whose manners we have described. They had made considerable progress in agriculture; they dwelt in large towns; they were not strangers to some species of commerce; and in the imperfect accounts of their institutions and laws, transmitted to us by the early Spanish writers, we discern traces both of distributive justice and of criminal jurisdiction, in their interior police. But still, as the degree of their civilization was incomplete,

[c] B. Diaz. c. 41, 42. Herrera, dec. 2. lib. v. c. 3, 4.

and as they depended for subsistence not on agriculture alone, but trusted for it, in a great measure, to hunting, they retained many of the qualities natural to men in this state. Like them, they were fierce and revengeful; like them, too, they were high spirited and independent. In consequence of the former, they were involved in perpetual hostilities, and had but a slender and occasional intercourse with neighbouring states. The latter inspired them with such detestation of servitude, that they not only refused to stoop to a foreign yoke, and maintained an obstinate and successful contest in defence of their liberty against the superior power of the Mexican empire, but they guarded with equal solicitude against domestic tyranny; and disdaining to acknowledge any master, they lived under the mild and limited jurisdiction of a council elected by their several tribes.

Cortes, though he had received information concerning the martial character of this people, flattered himself that his professions of delivering the oppressed from the tyranny of Montezuma, their inveterate enmity to the Mexicans, and the example of their ancient allies the Zempoallans might induce the Tlascalans to grant him a friendly reception. In order to dispose them to this, four Zempoallans, of great eminence were sent ambassadors, to request, in his name, and in that of their cazique, that they would permit the Spaniards to pass through the territories of the republic in their way to Mexico. But instead of the favourable answer which was expected, the Tlascalans seized their ambassadors, and, without any regard to their public character, made preparations for sacrificing them to their gods. At the same time, they assembled their troops, in order to oppose those unknown invaders, if they should attempt to make their passage good by force of arms. Various motives concurred in precipitating the Tlascalans into this resolution. A fierce people, shut up within its



own narrow precincts, and, little accustomed to any intercourse with foreigners, is apt to consider every stranger as an enemy, and is easily excited to arms. They concluded from Cortes' proposal of visiting Montezuma in his capital, that, notwithstanding all his professions, he courted the friendship of a monarch whom they both hated and feared. The imprudent zeal of Cortes in violating the temples in Zempoalla, filled the Tlascalans with horror ; and as they were no less attached to their superstition than the other nations of New Spain, they were impatient to avenge their injured gods, and to acquire the merit of offering up to them, as victims, those impious men who had dared to profane their altars ; they contemned the small number of the Spaniards, as they had not yet measured their own strength with that of these new-enemies, and had no idea of the superiority which they derived from their arms and discipline.

Cortes, after waiting some days, in vain, for the return of his ambassadors, advanced, [Aug. 30] into the Tlascalan territories. As the resolutions of people who delight in war are executed with no less promptitude than they are formed, he found troops in the field ready to oppose him. They attacked him with great intrepidity, and, in the first encounter, wounded some of the Spaniards, and killed two horses ; a loss, in their situation, of great moment, because it was irreparable. From this specimen of their courage, Cortes saw the necessity of proceeding with caution. His army marched in close order ; he chose the stations, where he halted, with attention, and fortified every camp with extraordinary care. During fourteen days he was exposed to almost uninterrupted assaults, the Tlascalans advancing with numerous armies, and renewing the attack in various forms, with a degree of valour and perseverance to which the Spaniards had seen nothing parallel in the

New World. The Spanish historians describe those successive battles with great pomp, and enter into a minute detail of particulars, mingling many exaggerated and incredible circumstances [*d*], with such as are real and marvellous. But no power of words can render the recital of a combat interesting, where there is no equality of danger; and when the narrative closes with an account of thousands slain on the one side, while not a single person falls on the other, the most laboured descriptions of the previous disposition of the troops, or of the various vicissitudes in the engagement, command no attention.

There are some circumstances, however, in this war, which are memorable, and merit notice, as they throw light upon the character both of the people of New Spain, and of their conquerors. Though the Tlascalans brought into the field such numerous armies as appear sufficient to have overwhelmed the Spaniards, they were never able to make any impression upon their small battalion. Singular as this may seem, it is not inexplicable. The Tlascalans, though addicted to war, were, like all unpolished nations, strangers to military order and discipline, and lost in a great measure the advantage which they might have derived from their numbers, and the impetuosity of their attack, by their constant solicitude to carry off the dead and wounded. This point of honour, founded on a sentiment of tenderness natural to the human mind, and strengthened by anxiety to preserve the bodies of their countrymen from being devoured by their enemies, was universal among the people of New Spain. Attention to this pious office occupied them even during the heat of combat [*e*], broke their union, and diminished the force of the impression which they might have made by a joint effort.

Not only was their superiority in number of little

[*d*] See NOTE CV.

[*e*] B. Diaz. c. 65.

avail, but the imperfection of their military weapons rendered their valour in a great measure inoffensive. After three battles, and many skirmishes and assaults, not one Spaniard was killed in the field. Arrows and spears, headed with flint or the bones of fishes, stakes hardened in the fire, and wooden swords, though destructive weapons among naked Indians, were easily turned aside by the Spanish bucklers, and could hardly penetrate the *escaupiles*, or quilted jackets, which the soldiers wore. The Tlascalans advanced boldly to the charge, and often fought hand to hand. Many of the Spaniards were wounded, though all slightly, which cannot be imputed to any want of courage or strength in their enemies, but to the defect of the arms with which they assailed them.

Notwithstanding the fury with which the Tlascalans attacked the Spaniards, they seem to have conducted their hostilities with some degree of barbarous generosity. They gave the Spaniards warning of their hostile intentions, and as they knew that their invaders wanted provisions, and imagined, perhaps, like the other Americans, that they had left their own country because it did not afford them subsistence, they sent to their camp a large supply of poultry and maize, desiring them to eat plentifully, because they scorned to attack an enemy enfeebled by hunger, and it would be an affront to their gods to offer them famished victims, as well as disagreeable to themselves to feed on such emaciated prey [*f*].

When they were taught by the first encounter with their new enemies, that it was not easy to execute this threat ; when they perceived, in the subsequent engagements, that notwithstanding all the efforts of their own valour, of which they had a very high opinion, not one of the Spaniards was slain or taken, they began to conceive them to be a superior

[*f*] Herrera, dec. 2. lib. vi. c. 6. Gomara, Cron. c. 47.

order of beings, against whom human power could not avail. In this extremity, they had recourse to their priests, requiring them to reveal the mysterious causes of such extraordinary events, and to declare what new means they should employ in order to repulse those formidable invaders. The priests, after many sacrifices and incantations, delivered this response. That these strangers were the offspring of the sun, procreated by his animating energy in the regions of the east ; that, by day, while cherished with the influence of his parental beams, they were invincible ; but by night, when his reviving heat was withdrawn, their vigour declined and faded like the herbs in the field, and they dwindled down into mortal men [g]. Theories less plausible have gained credit with more enlightened nations, and have influenced their conduct. In consequence of this, the Tlascalans, with the implicit confidence of men who fancy themselves to be under the guidance of Heaven, acted in contradiction to one of their most established maxims in war, and ventured to attack the enemy, with a strong body, in the night time, in hopes of destroying them when enfeebled and surprised. But Cortes had greater vigilance and discernment than to be deceived by the rude stratagems of an Indian army. The centinels at his out-posts, observing some extraordinary movement among the Tlascalans, gave the alarm. In a moment the troops were under arms, and sallying out, dispersed the party with great slaughter, without allowing it to approach the camp. The Tlascalans, convinced, by sad experience, that their priests had deluded them, and satisfied that they attempted in vain, either to deceive or to vanquish their enemies, their fierceness abated, and they began to incline seriously to peace.

They were at a loss, however, in what manner to

[g] B. Diaz. c. 66.

address the strangers, what idea to form of their character, and whether to consider them as beings of a gentle or of a malevolent nature. There were circumstances in their conduct which seemed to favour each opinion. On the one hand, as the Spaniards constantly dismissed the prisoners whom they took, not only without injury, but often with presents of European toys, and renewed their offers of peace after every victory ; this lenity amazed people, who, according to the exterminating system of war known in America, were accustomed to sacrifice and devour without mercy all the captives taken in battle, and disposed them to entertain favourable sentiments of the humanity of their new enemies. But, on the other hand, as Cortes had seized fifty of their countrymen who brought provisions to his camp, and, supposing them to be spies, had cut off their hands [*h*]; this bloody spectacle, added to the terror occasioned by the fire-arms and horses, filled them with dreadful impressions of the ferocity of their invaders [*i*]. This uncertainty was apparent in the mode of addressing the Spaniards. “ If,” said they, “ you are divinities of a cruel and savage nature, we present to you five slaves, that you may drink their blood, and eat their flesh. If you are mild deities, accept an offering of incense and variegated plumes. If you are men, here is meat, and bread and fruit to nourish you [*h*].” The peace, which both parties now desired with equal ardour, was soon concluded. The Tlascalans yielded themselves as vassals to the crown of Castile, and engaged to assist Cortes in all his future operations. He took the republic under his protection, and promised to defend their persons and possessions from injury or violence.

This treaty was concluded at a seasonable juncture

[*h*] Cortes, Relat. Ramus. iii. 228. C. Gomara, Cron. c. 48.

[*i*] See NOTE CVI. [*k*] B. Diaz. c. 70. Gomara, Cron. c. 47. Herrera, dec. 2. lib. vi. c. 7.

for the Spaniards. The fatigue of service among a small body of men, surrounded by such a multitude of enemies, was incredible. Half the army was on duty every night, and even they whose turn it was to rest, slept always upon their arms, that they might be ready to run to their posts on a moment's warning. Many of them were wounded, a good number, and among these Cortes himself, laboured under the distempers prevalent in hot climates, and several had died since they set out from Vera Cruz. Notwithstanding the supplies which they received from the Tlascalans, they were often in want of provisions, and so destitute of the necessaries most requisite in dangerous service, that they had no salve to dress their wounds, but what was composed with the fat of the Indians whom they had slain [l]. Worn out with such intolerable toil and hardships, many of the soldiers began to murmur, and, when they reflected on the multitude and boldness of their enemies, more were ready to despair. It required the utmost exertion of Cortes' authority and address to check this spirit of despondency in its progress, and to re-animate his followers with their wonted sense of their own superiority over the enemies with whom they had to contend [m]. The submission of the Tlascalans, and their own triumphant entry into the capital city, where they were received with the reverence paid to beings of a superior order, banished, at once, from the minds of the Spaniards, all memory of past sufferings, dispelled every anxious thought with respect to their future operations, and fully satisfied them that there was not now any power in America able to withstand their arms [n].

Cortes remained twenty days in Tlascala, in order to allow his troops a short interval of repose after

[l] B. Diaz. c. 62. 65. [m] Cortes, Relat. Ramus. iii. 229. B. Diaz. c. 69. Gomara, Cron. c. 51. [n] Cortes, Relat. Ramus, iii. 250. B. Diaz. c. 72.

such hard service. During that time, he was employed in transactions and inquiries of great moment with respect to his future schemes. In his daily conferences with the Tlascalan chiefs, he received information concerning every particular relative to the state of the Mexican empire, or to the qualities of its sovereign, which could be of use in regulating his conduct, whether he should be obliged to act as a friend or as an enemy. As he found that the antipathy of his new allies to the Mexican nation was no less implacable than had been represented, and perceived what benefit he might derive from the aid of such powerful confederates, he employed all his powers of insinuation in order to gain their confidence. Nor was any extraordinary exertion of these necessary. The Tlascalans, with the levity of mind natural to unpolished men, were, of their own accord, disposed to run from the extreme of hatred to that of fondness. Every thing in the appearance and conduct of their guests, was to them matter of wonder [o]. They gazed with admiration at whatever the Spaniards did, and fancying them to be of heavenly origin, were eager not only to comply with their demands, but to anticipate their wishes. They offered, accordingly, to accompany Cortes in his march to Mexico, with all the forces of the republic, under the command of their most experienced captains.

But, after bestowing so much pains on cementing this union, all the beneficial fruits of it were on the point of being lost, by a new effusion of that intemperate religious zeal with which Cortes was animated, no less than the other adventurers of the age. They all considered themselves as instruments employed by Heaven to propagate the Christian faith, and the less they were qualified, either by their knowledge or morals, for such a function, they were more eager

[o] See NOTE CVII.

to discharge it. The profound veneration of the Tlascalans for the Spaniards, having encouraged Cortes to explain to some of their chiefs the doctrines of the Christian religion, and to insist that they should abandon their own superstitions, and embrace the faith of their new friends, they, according to an idea universal among barbarous nations, readily acknowledged the truth and excellence of what he taught; but contended, that the *Teules* of Tlascala were divinities no less than the God in whom the Spaniards believed; and as that Being was entitled to the homage of Europeans, so they were bound to revere the same powers which their ancestors had worshipped. Cortes continued, nevertheless, to urge his demand in a tone of authority, mingling threats with his arguments, until the Tlascalans could bear it no longer, and conjured him never to mention this again, lest the gods should avenge on their heads the guilt of having listened to such a proposition. Cortes, astonished and enraged at their obstinacy, prepared to execute by force, what he could not accomplish by persuasion, and was going to overturn their altars, and cast down their idols with the same violent hand as at Zempoalla, if father Bartholomew de Olmedo, chaplain to the expedition, had not checked his inconsiderate impetuosity. He represented the imprudence of such an attempt in a large city newly reconciled, and filled with people no less superstitious than warlike; he declared, that the proceeding at Zempoalla had always appeared to him precipitate and unjust; that religion was not to be propagated by the sword, or infidels to be converted by violence; that other weapons were to be employed in this ministry: patient instruction must enlighten the understanding, and pious example captivate the heart, before men could be induced to abandon error, and embrace



the truth [*p*]. Amidst scenes, where a narrow-minded bigotry appears in such close union with oppression and cruelty, sentiments so liberal and humane sooth the mind with unexpected pleasure; and at a time when the rights of conscience were little understood in the Christian world, and the idea of toleration unknown, one is astonished to find a Spanish monk of the sixteenth century among the first advocates against persecution, and in behalf of religious liberty. The remonstrances of an ecclesiastic, no less respectable for wisdom than virtue, had their proper weight with Cortes. He left the Tlascalans in the undisturbed exercise of their own rites, requiring only that they should desist from their horrid practice of offering human victims in sacrifice.

Cortes, as soon as his troops were fit for service, resolved to continue his march towards Mexico, notwithstanding the earnest dissuasives of the Tlascalans, who represented his destruction as unavoidable, if he put himself in the power of a prince so faithless and cruel as Montezuma. As he was accompanied by six thousand Tlascalans, he had now the command of forces which resembled a regular army. They directed their course towards Cholula [Oct. 13]; Montezuma, who had at length consented to admit the Spaniards into his presence, having informed Cortes, that he had given orders for his friendly reception there. Cholula was a considerable town, and, though only five leagues distant from Tlascala, was formerly an independent state, but had been lately subjected to the Mexican empire. This was considered by all the people of New Spain as a holy place, the sanctuary and chief seat of their gods, to which pilgrims resorted from every province, and a greater number of human victims were offered in its

[*p*] B. Diaz. c. 77. p. 54. c. 83. p. 61.

principal temple than even in that of Mexico [*q*]. Montezuma seems to have invited the Spaniards thither, either from some superstitious hope that the gods would not suffer this sacred mansion to be defiled, without pouring down their wrath upon those impious strangers, who ventured to insult their power in the place of its peculiar residence ; or from a belief that he himself might there attempt to cut them off with more certain success, under the immediate protection of his divinities.

Cortes had been warned by the Tlascalans, before he set out on his march, to keep a watchful eye over the Cholulans. He himself, though received into the town with much seeming respect and cordiality, observed several circumstances in their conduct which excited suspicion. Two of the Tlascalans, who were encamped at some distance from the town, as the Cholulans refused to admit their ancient enemies within its precincts, having found means to enter in disguise, acquainted Cortes, that they observed the women and children of the principal citizens retiring in great hurry every night ; and that six children had been sacrificed in the chief temple, a rite which indicated the execution of some warlike enterprise to be approaching. At the same time, Marina the interpreter received information from an Indian woman of distinction, whose confidence she had gained, that the destruction of her friends was concerted ; that a body of Mexican troops lay concealed near the town ; that some of the streets were barricaded, and in others, pits or deep trenches were dug, and slightly covered over, as traps into which the horses might fall ; that stones or missive weapons were collected on the tops of the temples, with which to overwhelm the infantry ; that the fatal hour was now at hand, and their ruin unavoidable. Cortes,

[*q*] Torquemada, Monar. Ind. i. 281, 282. ii. 291. Gomara, Cron. c. 61. Herrera, dec. 2. lib. vii. c. 2.

alarmed at this concurring evidence, secretly arrested three of the chief priests, and extorted from them a confession, that confirmed the intelligence which he had received. As not a moment was to be lost, he instantly resolved to prevent his enemies, and to inflict on them such dreadful vengeance as might strike Montezuma and his subjects with terror. For this purpose, the Spaniards and Zempoallans were drawn up in a large court, which had been allotted for their quarters, near the centre of the town, the Tlascalans had orders to advance; the magistrates and several of the chief citizens were sent for, under various pretexts, and seized. On a signal given, the troops rushed out, and fell upon the multitude, destitute of leaders, and so much astonished, that the weapons dropping from their hands, they stood motionless, and incapable of defence. While the Spaniards pressed them in front, the Tlascalans attacked them in the rear. The streets were filled with bloodshed and death. The temples, which afforded a retreat to the priests and some of the leading men, were set on fire, and they perished in the flames. This scene of horror continued two days; during which, the wretched inhabitants suffered all that the destructive rage of the Spaniards, or the implacable revenge of their Indian allies, could inflict. At length the carnage ceased, after the slaughter of six thousand Cholulans, without the loss of a single Spaniard. Cortes then released the magistrates, and reproaching them bitterly for their intended treachery, declared, that, as justice was now appeased, he forgave the offence, but required them to recall the citizens who had fled, and re-establish order in the town. Such was the ascendant which the Spaniards had acquired over this superstitious race of men, and so deeply were they impressed with an opinion of their superior discernment, as well as power, that, in obedience to this command, the city

was in a few days filled again with people, who, amidst the ruins of their sacred buildings, yielded respectful service to men, whose hands were stained with the blood of their relations and fellow-citizens [r].

From Cholula, Cortes advanced directly towards Mexico [Oct. 29], which was only twenty leagues distant. In every place through which he passed, he was received as a person possessed of sufficient power to deliver the empire from the oppression under which it groaned; and the caziques or governors communicated to him all the grievances which they felt under the tyrannical government of Montezuma, with that unreserved confidence which men naturally repose in superior beings. When Cortes first observed the seeds of discontent in the remote provinces of the empire, hope dawned upon his mind; but when he now discovered such symptoms of alienation from their monarch near the seat of government, he concluded that the vital parts of the constitution were affected, and conceived the most sanguine expectations of overturning a state, whose natural strength was thus divided and impaired. While those reflections encouraged the general to persist in his arduous undertaking, the soldiers were no less animated by observations more obvious to their capacity. In descending from the mountains of Chalco, across which the road lay, the vast plain of Mexico opened gradually to their view. When they first beheld this prospect, one of the most striking and beautiful on the face of the earth; when they observed fertile and cultivated fields, stretching farther than the eye could reach; when they saw a lake resembling the sea in extent, encompassed with large towns, and discovered the capital city rising upon an island in the middle, adorned with its tem-

[r] Cortes, Relat. Ramus. iii. 231. B. Diaz. c. 83. Gomara, Cron. c. 64. Herrera, dec. 2. lib. vii. c. 1, 2. See NOTE CVIII.

ples and turrets ; the scene so far exceeded their imagination, that some believed the fanciful descriptions of romance were realized, and that its enchanted palaces and gilded dooms were presented to their sight ; others could hardly persuade themselves that this wonderful spectacle was any thing more than a dream [s]. As they advanced, their doubts were removed, but their amazement increased. They were now fully satisfied that the country was rich beyond any conception which they had formed of it, and flattered themselves that at length they should obtain an ample recompense for all their services and sufferings.

Hitherto they had met with no enemy to oppose their progress, though several circumstances occurred which led them to suspect that some design was formed to surprise and cut them off. Many messengers arrived successively from Montezuma, permitting them one day to advance, requiring them on the next to retire, as his hopes or fears alternately prevailed ; and so wonderful was this infatuation, which seems to be unaccountable on any supposition but that of a superstitious dread of the Spaniards, as beings of a superior nature, that Cortes was almost at the gates of the capital, before the monarch had determined whether to receive him as a friend, or to oppose him as an enemy. But as no sign of open hostility appeared, the Spaniards, without regarding the fluctuations of Montezuma's sentiments, continued their march along the causeway which led to Mexico through the lake, with great circumspection and the strictest discipline, though without seeming to suspect the prince whom they were about to visit.

When they drew near the city, about a thousand persons, who appeared to be of distinction, came forth to meet them, adorned with plumes, and clad in mantles of fine cotton. Each of these, in his order,

[s] See NOTE CIX.

passed by Cortes, and saluted him according to the mode deemed most respectful and submissive in their country. They announced the approach of Montezuma himself, and soon after his harbingers came in sight. There appeared first two hundred persons in an uniform dress, with large plumes of feathers, alike in fashion, marching two and two, in deep silence, bare-footed, with their eyes fixed on the ground. These were followed by a company of higher rank, in their most showy apparel, in the midst of whom was Montezuma, in a chair or litter richly ornamented with gold, and feathers of various colours. Four of his principal favourites carried him on their shoulders, others supported a canopy of curious workmanship over his head. Before him marched three officers with rods of gold in their hands, which they lifted up on high at certain intervals, and at that signal all the people bowed their heads, and hid their faces, as unworthy to look on so great a monarch. When he drew near, Cortes dismounted, advancing towards him with officious haste, and in a respectful posture. At the same time Montezuma alighted from his chair, and leaning on the arms of two of his near relations, approached with a slow and stately pace, his attendants covering the street with cotton cloths, that he might not touch the ground. Cortes accosted him with profound reverence, after the European fashion. He returned the salutation, according to the mode of his country, by touching the earth with his hand, and then kissing it. This ceremony, the customary expression of veneration from inferiors towards those who are above them in rank, appeared such amazing condescension in a proud monarch, who scarcely deigned to consider the rest of mankind as of the same species with himself, that all his subjects firmly believed those persons, before whom he humbled himself in this manner, to be something more than

human. Accordingly, as they marched through the crowd, the Spaniards frequently, and with much satisfaction, heard themselves denominated *Teules*, or divinities. Nothing material passed in this first interview. Montezuma conducted Cortes to the quarters which he had prepared for his reception, and immediately took leave of him, with a politeness not unworthy of a court more refined. “You are now,” says he “with your brothers in your own house; refresh yourselves after your fatigue, and be happy until I return [1].” The place allotted to the Spaniards for their lodging was a house built by the father of Montezuma. It was surrounded by a stone-wall with towers at proper distances, which served for defence as well as for ornament, and its apartments and courts were so large, as to accommodate both the Spaniards and their Indian allies. The first care of Cortes was to take precautions for his security, by planting the artillery so as to command the different avenues which led to it, by appointing a large division of his troops to be always on guard, and by posting centinels at proper stations, with injunctions to observe the same vigilant discipline as if they were within sight of an enemy’s camp.

In the evening, Montezuma returned to visit his guests with the same pomp as in their first interview, and brought presents of such value, not only to Cortes and to his officers, but even to the private men, as proved the liberality of the monarch to be suitable to the opulence of his kingdom. A long conference ensued, in which Cortes learned what was the opinion of Montezuma with respect to the Spaniards. It was an established tradition, he told him, among the Mexicans, that their ancestors came originally from a remote region, and conquered the provinces now subject to his dominion; that after

[1] Cortes, Relat. Ramus. iii. 232—235. B. Diaz. c. 83—88. Gomara, Croq. c. 64, 65. Herrera, dec. 2. lib. vii. c. 3, 4, 5.

they were settled there, the great captain who conducted this colony returned to his own country, promising, that at some future period his descendants should visit them, assume the government, and reform their constitution and laws; that, from what he had heard and seen of Cortes and his followers, he was convinced that they were the very persons whose appearance the Mexican traditions and prophecies taught them to expect; that accordingly he had received them, not as strangers, but as relations of the same blood and parentage, and desired that they might consider themselves as masters in his dominions, for both himself and his subjects should be ready to comply with their will, and even to prevent their wishes. Cortes made a reply in his usual style with respect to the dignity and power of his sovereign, and his intention in sending him into that country; artfully endeavouring so to frame his discourse, that it might coincide as much as possible with the idea which Montezuma had formed concerning the origin of the Spaniards. Next morning, Cortes and some of his principal attendants were admitted to a public audience of the emperor. The three subsequent days were employed in viewing the city; the appearance of which, so far superior in the order of its buildings and the number of its inhabitants to any place the Spaniards had beheld in America, and yet so little resembling the structure of an European city, filled them with surprise and admiration.

Mexico, or *Tenuchtitlan*, as it was anciently called by the natives, is situated in a large plain, environed by mountains of such height, that, though within the torrid zone, the temperature of its climate is mild and healthful. All the moisture which descends from the high grounds is collected in several lakes, the two largest of which, of about ninety miles in circuit, communicate with each other. The waters of the one are fresh, those of the other brackish.



On the banks of the latter, and on some small islands adjoining to them, the capital of Montezuma's empire was built. The access to the city was by artificial causeways or streets formed of stones and earth, about thirty feet in breadth. As the waters of the lake during the rainy season overflowed the flat country, these causeways were of considerable length. That of Tacuba, on the west, extended a mile and a half; that of Tepeaca [*t*], on the north-west, three miles; that of Cuoyacan, towards the south, six miles. On the east there was no causeway, and the city could be approached only by canoes [*u*]. In each of these causeways were openings at proper intervals, through which the waters flowed, and over these beams of timber were laid, which being covered with earth, the causeway or street had everywhere an uniform appearance. As the approaches to the city were singular, its construction was remarkable. Not only the temples of their gods, but the houses belonging to the monarch, and to persons of distinction, were of such dimensions, that, in comparison with any other buildings which had been hitherto discovered in America, they might be termed magnificent. The habitations of the common people were mean, resembling the huts of other Indians. But they were all placed in a regular manner, on the banks of the canals which passed through the city, in some of its districts, or on the sides of the streets which intersected it in other quarters. In several places were large openings or squares, one of

[*t*] I am indebted to M. Clavigero for correcting an error of importance in my description of Mexico. From the east, where Tezeuco was situated, there was no causeway, as I have observed, and yet by some inattention on my part, or on that of the printer, in all of the former editions one of the causeways was said to lead to Tezeuco. M. Clavigero's measurement of the length of these causeways differs somewhat from that which I have adopted from F. Torribio.—Clavig. ii. p. 72.

[*u*] F. Torribio MS.

which, allotted for the great market, is said to have been so spacious, that forty or fifty thousand persons carried on traffic there. In this city, the pride of the New World, and the noblest monument of the industry and art of man, while unacquainted with the use of iron, and destitute of aid from any domestic animal, the Spaniards, who are most moderate in their computations, reckon that there were at least sixty thousand inhabitants [*x*.]

But how much soever the novelty of those objects might amuse or astonish the Spaniards, they felt the utmost solicitude with respect to their own situation. From a concurrence of circumstances, no less unexpected than favourable to their progress, they had been allowed to penetrate into the heart of a powerful kingdom, and were now lodged in its capital, without having once met with open opposition from its monarch. The Tlascalans, however, had earnestly dissuaded them from placing such confidence in Montezuma, as to enter a city of such a peculiar situation as Mexico, where that prince would have them at mercy, shut up as it were in a snare, from which it was impossible to escape. They assured him that the Mexican priests had, in the name of the gods, counselled their sovereign to admit the Spaniards into the capital, that he might cut them off there at one blow with perfect security [*y*]. They now perceived, too plainly, that the apprehensions of their allies were not destitute of foundation; that, by breaking the bridges placed at certain intervals on the causeways, or by destroying part of the causeways themselves, their retreat would be rendered impracticable, and they must remain cooped up in the centre of a hostile city, surrounded by multitudes sufficient to overwhelm them, and with-

[*x*] Cortes, Relat. Ram. iii. 293. D. Relat. della gran Citta de Mexico, par un Gentelhuomo del Cortese. Ram. ibid. 304. E. Herrera, dec. 2. lib. vii. c. 14, &c. [*y*] B. Diaz. c. 85, 86.

out a possibility of receiving aid from their allies. Montezuma had, indeed, received them with distinguished respect. But ought they to reckon upon this as real, or to consider it as feigned? Even if it were sincere, could they promise on its continuance? Their safety depended upon the will of a monarch in whose attachment they had no reason to confide; and an order flowing from his caprice, or a word uttered by him in passion, might decide irrevocably concerning their fate [z].

These reflections, so obvious as to occur to the meanest soldier, did not escape the vigilant sagacity of their general. Before he set out from Cholula, Cortes had received advice from Villa Rica [a], that Qualpopoca, one of the Mexican generals on the frontiers, having assembled an army in order to attack some of the people whom the Spaniards had encouraged to throw off the Mexican yoke, Escalante had marched out with part of the garrison to support his allies; that an engagement had ensued, in which, though the Spaniards were victorious, Escalante, with seven of his men, had been mortally wounded, his horse killed, and one Spaniard had been surrounded by the enemy, and taken alive; that the head of this unfortunate captive, after being carried in triumph to different cities, in order to convince the people that their invaders were not immortal, had been sent to Mexico [b]. Cortes, though alarmed with this intelligence, as an indication of Montezuma's hostile intentions, had continued his march. But as soon as he entered Mexico, he became sensible, that, from an excess of confidence, in the superior valour and discipline of his troops, as well as from the disadvantage of having nothing to guide him in an unknown country, but the defective intelligence which he had received from people with whom his mode of

[z] B. Diaz. c. 94. [a] Cortes, Relat. Ram. iii. 235. C.

[b] B. Diaz. c. 93, 94. Herrera, dec. 2. lib. viii. c. 1.

communication was very imperfect, he had pushed forward into a situation, where it was difficult to continue, and from which it was dangerous to retire. Disgrace, and perhaps ruin, was the certain consequence of attempting the latter. The success of his enterprise depended upon supporting the high opinion which the people of New Spain had formed with respect to the irresistible power of his arms. Upon the first symptom of timidity on his part, their veneration would cease, and Montezuma, whom fear alone restrained at present, would let loose upon him the whole force of his empire. At the same time, he knew that the countenance of his own sovereign was to be obtained only by a series of victories, and that nothing but the merit of extraordinary success could screen his conduct from the censure of irregularity. From all these considerations it was necessary to maintain his station, and to extricate himself out of the difficulties in which one bold step had involved him, by venturing upon another still bolder. The situation was trying, but his mind was equal to it; and after revolving the matter with deep attention, he fixed upon a plan no less extraordinary than daring. He determined to seize Montezuma in his palace, and to carry him as a prisoner to the Spanish quarters. From the superstitious veneration of the Mexicans for the person of their monarch, as well as their implicit submission to his will, he hoped, by having Montezuma in his power, to acquire the supreme direction of their affairs; or, at least, with such a sacred pledge in his hands, he made no doubt of being secure from any effort of their violence.

This he immediately proposed to his officers. The timid startled at a measure so audacious, and raised objections. The more intelligent and resolute, conscious that it was the only resource in which there appeared any prospect of safety, warmly approved of it, and brought over their companions so cordially to

the same opinion, that it was agreed instantly to make the attempt. At his usual hour of visiting Montezuma, Cortes went to the palace, accompanied by Alvarado, Sandoval, Lugo, Velasquez de Leon, and Davila, five of his principal officers, and as many trusty soldiers. Thirty chosen men followed, not in regular order, but sauntering at some distance, as if they had no object but curiosity; small parties were posted at proper intervals, in all the streets leading from the Spanish quarters to the court; and the remainder of his troops, with the Tlascalan allies, were under arms, ready to sally out on the first alarm. Cortes and his attendants were admitted without suspicion; the Mexicans retiring, as usual, out of respect. He addressed the monarch in a tone very different from that which he had employed in former conferences, reproaching him bitterly as the author of the violent assault made upon the Spaniards by one of his officers, and demanded public reparation for the loss which they had sustained by the death of some of their companions, as well as for the insult offered to the great prince whose servants they were. Montezuma, confounded at this unexpected accusation, and changing colour, either from consciousness of guilt, or from feeling the indignity with which he was treated, asserted his own innocence with great earnestness, and, as a proof of it, gave orders instantly to bring Qualpopoca and his accomplices prisoners to Mexico. Cortes replied, with seeming complaisance, that a declaration so respectable left no doubt remaining in his own mind, but that something more was requisite to satisfy his followers, who would never be convinced that Montezuma did not harbour hostile intentions against them, unless, as an evidence of his confidence and attachment, he removed from his own palace, and took up his residence in the Spanish quarters, where he should be served and honoured as became a great monarch.

The first mention of so strange a proposal bereaved Montezuma of speech, and almost of motion. At length, indignation gave him utterance, and he haughtily answered, "That persons of his rank were not accustomed voluntarily to give up themselves as prisoners; and were he mean enough to do so, his subjects would not permit such an affront to be offered to their sovereign." Cortes, unwilling to employ force, endeavoured alternately to sooth and to intimidate him. The altercation became warm; and having continued above three hours, Velasquez de Leon, an impetuous and gallant young man, exclaimed with impatience, "Why waste more time in vain? Let us either seize him instantly, or stab him to the heart." The threatening voice and fierce gestures with which these words were uttered, struck Montezuma. The Spaniards, he was sensible, had now proceeded so far, as left him no hope that they would recede. His own danger was imminent, the necessity unavoidable. He saw both, and abandoning himself to his fate, complied with their request.

His officers were called. He communicated to them his resolution. Though astonished and afflicted, they presumed not to question the will of their master, but carried him in silent pomp, all bathed in tears, to the Spanish quarters. When it was known that the strangers were conveying away the emperor, the people broke out into the wildest transports of grief and rage, threatening the Spaniards with immediate destruction, as the punishment justly due to their impious audacity. But as soon as Montezuma appeared with a seeming gaiety of countenance, and waved his hand, the tumult was hushed, and upon his declaring it to be of his own choice that he went to reside for some time among his new friends, the multitude, taught to revere every intimation of their sovereign's pleasure, quietly dispersed [c].

[c] B. Diaz. c. 95. Gomara, Cron. c. 83. Cortes, Relat. Ram. iii. p. 235, 236. Herrera, dec. 2. lib. viii. c. 2, 3.

Thus was a powerful prince seized by a few strangers in the midst of his capital, at noonday, and carried off as a prisoner without opposition or bloodshed. History contains nothing parallel to this event, either with respect to the temerity of the attempt, or the success of the execution; and were not all the circumstances of this extraordinary transaction authenticated by the most unquestionable evidence, they would appear so wild and extravagant, as to go far beyond the bounds of that probability which must be preserved even in fictitious narrations.

Montezuma was received in the Spanish quarters with all the ceremonious respect which Cortes had promised. He was attended by his own domestics, and served with his usual state. His principal officers had free access to him, and he carried on every function of government as if he had been at perfect liberty. The Spaniards, however, watched him with the scrupulous vigilance which was natural in guarding such an important prize [*d*], endeavouring at the same time to sooth and reconcile him to his situation, by every external demonstration of regard and attachment. But from captive princes the hour of humiliation and suffering is never far distant. Quapopoca, his son, and five of the principal officers who served under him, were brought prisoners to the capital [Dec. 4], in consequence of the orders which Montezuma had issued. The emperor gave them up to Cortes, that he might inquire into the nature of their crime, and determine their punishment. They were formally tried by a Spanish court-martial; and though they had acted no other part than what became loyal subjects and brave men, in obeying the orders of their lawful sovereign, and in opposing the invaders of their country, they were condemned to be burnt alive.

The execution of such atrocious deeds is seldom

[*d*] See NOTE CX.

long suspended. The unhappy victims were instantly led forth. The pile on which they were laid was composed of the weapons collected in the royal magazine for the public defence. An innumerable multitude of Mexicans beheld, in silent astonishment, the double insult offered to the majesty of their empire, an officer of distinction committed to the flames by the authority of strangers, for having done what he owed in duty to his natural sovereign ; and the arms provided by the foresight of their ancestors for avenging public wrongs, consumed before their eyes.

But these were not the most shocking indignities which the Mexicans had to bear. The Spaniards, convinced that Qualpopoca would not have ventured to attack Escalante without orders from his master, were not satisfied with inflicting vengeance on the instrument employed in committing that crime, while the author of it escaped with impunity. Just before Qualpopoca was led out to suffer, Cortes entered the apartment of Montezuma, followed by some of his officers, and a soldier carrying a pair of fetters ; and approaching the monarch with a stern countenance, told him, that as the persons who were now to undergo the punishment which they merited, had charged him as the cause of the outrage committed, it was necessary that he likewise should make atonement for that guilt ; then turning away abruptly, without waiting for a reply, commanded the soldier to clap the fetters on his legs. The orders were instantly executed. The disconsolate monarch, trained up with an idea that his person was sacred and inviolable, and considering this profanation of it as the prelude of immediate death, broke out into loud lamentations and complaints. His attendants, speechless with horror, fell at his feet, bathing them with their tears ; and bearing up the fetters in their hands, endeavoured with officious tenderness to lighten their pressure. Nor did their grief and despondency abate,



until Cortes returned from the execution, and with a cheerful countenance ordered the fetters to be taken off. As Montezuma's spirits had sunk with unmanly dejection, they now rose into indecent joy; and with an unbecoming transition, he passed at once from the anguish of despair to transports of gratitude and expressions of fondness towards his deliverer.

In those transactions, as represented by the Spanish historians, we search in vain for the qualities which distinguish other parts of Cortes' conduct. To usurp a jurisdiction which could not belong to a stranger, who assumed no higher character than that of an ambassador from a foreign prince, and, under colour of it, to inflict a capital punishment on men whose conduct entitled them to esteem, appears an act of barbarous cruelty. To put the monarch of a great kingdom in irons, and, after such ignominious treatment, suddenly to release him, seems to be a display of power no less inconsiderate than wanton. According to the common relation, no account can be given either of the one action or the other, but that Cortes, intoxicated with success, and presuming on the ascendant which he had acquired over the minds of the Mexicans, thought nothing too bold for him to undertake, or too dangerous to execute. But, in one view, these proceedings, however repugnant to justice and humanity, may have flowed from that artful policy which regulated every part of Cortes' behaviour towards the Mexicans. They had conceived the Spaniards to be an order of beings superior to men.

It was of the utmost consequence to cherish this illusion, and to keep up the veneration which it inspired. Cortes wished that shedding the blood of a Spaniard should be deemed the most heinous of all crimes; and nothing appeared better calculated to establish this opinion, than to condemn the first Mexi-

cans who had ventured to commit it to a cruel death, and to oblige their monarch himself to submit to a mortifying indignity, as an expiation for being accessory to a deed so atrocious [*e*].

1520.] The rigour with which Cortes punished the unhappy persons who first presumed to lay violent hands upon his followers, seems accordingly to have made all the impression that he desired. The Spirit of Montezuma was not only overawed, but subdued. During six months that Cortes remained in Mexico, the monarch continued in the Spanish quarters, with an appearance of as entire satisfaction and tranquillity, as if he had resided there, not from constraint, but through choice. His ministers and officers attended him as usual. He took cognizance of all affairs; every order was issued in his name. The external aspect of government appearing the same, and all its ancient forms being scrupulously observed, the people were so little sensible of any change, that they obeyed the mandates of their monarch with the same submissive reverence as ever. Such was the dread which both Montezuma and his subjects had of the Spaniards, or such the veneration in which they held them, that no attempt was made to deliver their sovereign from confinement; and though Cortes, relying on this ascendant which he had acquired over their minds, permitted him not only to visit his temples, but to make hunting excursions beyond the lake, a guard of a few Spaniards carried with it such a terror as to intimidate the multitude, and secure the captive monarch [*f*].

Thus by the fortunate temerity of Cortes in seizing Montezuma, the Spaniards at once secured to themselves more extensive authority in the Mexican Empire than it was possible to have acquired in a long course of time by open force; and they exercised

[*e*] See NOTE CXI.

[*f*] Cortes, Relat. p. 236. E. B. Diaz. c. 97, 98, 99.

more absolute sway in the name of another than they could have done in their own. The arts of polished nations, in subjecting such as are less improved, have been nearly the same in every period. The system of screening a foreign usurpation, under the sanction of authority derived from the natural rulers of a country, the device of employing the magistrates and forms already established as instruments to introduce a new dominion, of which we are apt to boast as sublime refinements in policy peculiar to the present age, were inventions of a more early period, and had been tried with success in the West, long before they were practised in the East.

Cortes availed himself to the utmost of the power which he possessed by being able to act in the name of Montezuma. He sent some Spaniards, whom he judged best qualified for such commissions, into different parts of the empire, accompanied by persons of distinction, whom Montezuma appointed to attend them both as guides and protectors. They visited most of the provinces, viewed their soil and productions, surveyed with particular care the districts which yielded gold or silver, pitched upon several places as proper stations for future colonies, and endeavoured to prepare the minds of the people for submitting to the Spanish yoke. While they were thus employed, Cortes, in the name and by the authority of Montezuma, degraded some of the principal officers in the empire, whose abilities or independent spirit excited his jealousy, and substituted in their place persons less capable or more obsequious.

One thing still was wanting to complete his security. He wished to have such command of the lake as might ensure a retreat, if, either from levity or disgust, the Mexicans should take arms against him, and break down the bridges or causeways. This, too, his own address, and the facility of Montezuma,

enabled him to accomplish. Having frequently entertained his prisoner with pompous accounts of the European marine and art of navigation, he awakened his curiosity to see those moving palaces which made their way through the water without oars. Under pretext of gratifying this desire, Cortes persuaded Montezuma to appoint some of his subjects to fetch part of the naval stores which the Spaniards had deposited at Vera Cruz to Mexico, and to employ others in cutting down and preparing timber. With their assistance, the Spanish carpenters soon completed two brigantines, which afforded a frivolous amusement to the monarch, and were considered by Cortes as a certain resource, if he should be obliged to retire.

Encouraged by so many instances of the monarch's tame submission to his will, Cortes ventured to put it to a proof still more trying. He urged Montezuma to acknowledge himself a vassal of the king of Castile, to hold his crown of him as superior, and to subject his dominions to the payment of an annual tribute. With this requisition, the last and most humbling that can be made to one possessed of sovereign authority, Montezuma was so obsequious as to comply. He called together the chief men of his empire, and in a solemn harangue, reminding them of the traditions and prophecies which led them to expect the arrival of a people sprung from the same stock with themselves, in order to take possession of the supreme power, he declared his belief that the Spaniards were this promised race; that therefore he recognized the right of their monarch to govern the Mexican empire; that he would lay his crown at his feet, and obey him as a tributary. When uttering these words, Montezuma discovered how deeply he was affected in making such a sacrifice. Tears and groans frequently interrupted his discourse. Overawed and broken as his spirit was, it still retained

such a sense of dignity, as to feel that pang which pierces the heart of princes when constrained to resign independent power. The first mention of such a resolution struck the assembly dumb with astonishment. This was followed by a sullen murmur of sorrow, mingled with indignation, which indicated some violent eruption of rage to be near at hand. This Cortes foresaw, and seasonably interposed to prevent it, by declaring that his master had no intention to deprive Montezuma of the royal dignity, or to make any innovation upon the constitution and laws of the Mexican empire. This assurance, added to their dread of the Spanish power, and to the authority of their monarch's example, extorted a reluctant consent from the assembly [g]. The act of submission and homage was executed with all the formalities which the Spaniards were pleased to prescribe [h].

Montezuma, at the desire of Cortes, accompanied this profession of fealty and homage with a magnificent present to his new sovereign; and, after his example, his subjects brought in very liberal contributions. The Spaniards now collected all the treasure which had been either voluntarily bestowed upon them at different times by Montezuma, or had been extorted from his people under various pretexts; and having melted the gold and silver, the value of these, without including jewels and ornaments of various kinds, which were preserved on account of their curious workmanship, amounted to six hundred thousand *pesos*. The soldiers were impatient to have it divided, and Cortes complied with their desire. A fifth of the whole was first set apart as the tax due to the king. Another fifth was allotted to Cortes, as commander in chief. The sums advanced by Velasquez, by Cortes, and by some

[g] See NOTE CXII. [h] Cortes, Relat. 238. D. B. Diaz, p. 101. Gomara, Cron. c. 92. Herrera, dec. 2. lib. x. c. 4.

of the officers, towards defraying the expence of fitting out the armament, were then deducted. The remainder was divided among the army, including the garrison of Vera Cruz, in proportion to their different ranks. After so many defalcations, the share of a private man did not exceed a hundred pesos. This sum fell so far below their sanguine expectations, that some soldiers rejected it with scorn, and others murmured so loudly at this cruel disappointment of their hopes, that it required all the address of Cortes, and no small exertion of his liberality, to appease them. The complaints of the army were not altogether destitute of foundation. As the crown had contributed nothing towards the equipment or success of the armament, it was not without regret that the soldiers beheld it sweep away so great a proportion of the treasure purchased by their blood and toil. What fell to the share of the general appeared, according to the ideas of wealth in the sixteenth century, an enormous sum. Some of Cortes' favourites had secretly appropriated to their own use several ornaments of gold, which neither paid the royal fifth, nor were brought into account as part of the common stock. It was, however, so manifestly the interest of Cortes at this period to make a large remittance to the king, that it is highly probable those concealments were not of great consequence.

The total sum amassed by the Spaniards bears no proportion to the ideas which might be formed, either by reflecting on the descriptions given by historians of the ancient splendour of Mexico, or by considering the productions of its mines in modern times. But, among the ancient Mexicans, gold and silver were not the standards by which the worth of other commodities was estimated; and destitute of the artificial value derived from this circumstance, were no farther in request than as they furnished

materials for ornaments and trinkets. These were either consecrated to the gods in their temples, or were worn as marks of distinction by their princes and some of their most eminent chiefs. As the consumption of the precious metals was inconsiderable, the demand for them was not such as to put either the ingenuity or industry of the Mexicans on the stretch, in order to augment their store. They were altogether unacquainted with the art of working the rich mines with which their country abounded. What gold they had was gathered in the beds of rivers, native, and ripened into a pure metallic state [*i*]. The utmost effort of their labour in search of it was to wash the earth carried down by torrents from the mountains, and to pick out the grains of gold which subsided; and even this simple operation, according to the report of the persons whom Cortes appointed to survey the provinces where there was a prospect of finding mines, they performed very unskilfully [*k*]. From all those causes, the whole mass of gold in possession of the Mexicans was not great. As silver is rarely found pure, and the Mexican art was too rude to conduct the process for refining it in a proper manner, the quantity of this metal was still less considerable [*l*]. Thus, though the Spaniards had exerted all the power which they possessed in Mexico, and often with indecent rapacity, in order to gratify their predominant passion, and though Montezuma had fondly exhausted his treasures, in hopes of satiating their thirst for gold, the product of both, which probably included a great part of the bullion in the empire, did not rise in value above what has been mentioned [*m*].

But however pliant Montezuma might be in other matters, with respect to one point he was inflexible.

[*i*] Cortes, Relat. p. 236. F. B. Diaz. c. 102, 103. Gomara, Cron. c. 90. [*k*] B. Diaz. c. 103. [*l*] Herrera, dec. 2. lib. ix. c. 4. [*m*] See NOTE CXIII.

Though Cortes often urged him, with the importunate zeal of a missionary, to renounce his false gods, and to embrace the Christian faith, he always rejected the proposition with horror. Superstition, among the Mexicans, was formed into such a regular and complete system, that its institutions naturally took fast hold of the mind; and while the rude tribes in other parts of America were easily induced to relinquish a few notions and rites, so loose and arbitrary as hardly to merit the name of a public religion, the Mexicans adhered tenaciously to their mode of worship, which, however barbarous, was accompanied with such order and solemnity as to render it an object of the highest veneration. Cortes, finding all his attempts ineffectual to shake the constancy of Montezuma, was so much enraged at his obstinacy, that in a transport of zeal he led out his soldiers to throw down the idols in the great temple by force. But the priests taking arms in defence of their altars, and the people crowding with great ardour to support them, Cortes' prudence overruled his zeal, and induced him to desist from his rash attempt, after dislodging the idols from one of the shrines, and placing in their stead an image of the Virgin Mary [n].

From that moment the Mexicans, who had permitted the imprisonment of their sovereign, and suffered the exactions of strangers without a struggle, began to meditate how they might expel or destroy the Spaniards, and thought themselves called upon to avenge their insulted deities. The priests and leading men held frequent consultations with Montezuma for this purpose. But as it might prove fatal to the captive monarch to attempt either the one or the other by violence, he was willing to try more gentle means. Having called Cortes into his presence, he observed, that now, as all the purposes of his embassy were fully accomplished, the gods had declared their

[\*] See NOTE CXIV.



will, and the people signified their desire that he and his followers should instantly depart out of the empire. With this he required them to comply, or unavoidable destruction would fall suddenly on their heads. The tenor of this unexpected requisition, as well as the determined tone in which it was uttered, left Cortes no room to doubt that it was the result of some deep scheme concerted between Montezuma and his subjects. He quickly perceived that he might derive more advantage from a seeming compliance with the monarch's inclination, than from an ill-timed attempt to change or to oppose it; and replied, with great composure, that he had already begun to prepare for returning to his own country; but as he had destroyed the vessels in which he arrived, some time was requisite for building other ships. This appeared reasonable. A number of Mexicans were sent to Vera Cruz to cut down timber, and some Spanish carpenters were appointed to superintend the work. Cortes flattered himself, that during this interval he might either find means to avert the threatened danger, or receive such reinforcements as would enable him to despise it.

Almost nine months were elapsed since Portocarrero and Montejo had sailed with his dispatches to Spain; and he daily expected their return with a confirmation of his authority from the king. Without this, his condition was insecure and precarious, and after all the great things which he had done, it might be his doom to bear the name and suffer the punishment of a traitor. Rapid and extensive as his progress had been, he could not hope to complete the reduction of a great empire with so small a body of men, which by this time diseases of various kinds considerably thinned; nor could he apply for recruits to the Spanish settlements in the islands until he received the royal approbation of his proceedings.

While he remained in this cruel situation, anxious

about what was past, uncertain with respect to the future, and, by the late declaration of Montezuma, oppressed with a new addition of cares, a Mexican courier arrived with an account of some ships having appeared on the coast. Cortes, with fond credulity, imagining that his messengers were returned from Spain, and that the completion of all his wishes and hopes was at hand, imparted the glad tidings to his companions, who received them with transports of mutual gratulation. Their joy was not of long continuance. A courier from Sandoval, whom Cortes had appointed to succeed Escalante in command at Vera Cruz, brought certain information that the armament was fitted out by Velasquez, governor of Cuba, and instead of bringing the aid which they expected, threatened them with immediate destruction.

The motives which prompted Velasquez to this violent measure are obvious. From the circumstances of Cortes' departure, it was impossible not to suspect his intention of throwing off all dependence upon him. His neglecting to transmit any account of his operations to Cuba, strengthened this suspicion, which was at last confirmed beyond doubt, by the indiscretion of the officers whom Cortes sent to Spain. They, from some motive which is not clearly explained by the contemporary historians, touched at the island of Cuba, contrary to the peremptory orders of their general [o]. By this means Velasquez not only learned that Cortes and his followers, after formally renouncing all connection with him, had established an independent colony in New Spain, and were soliciting the king to confirm their proceedings by his authority; but he obtained particular information concerning the opulence of the country, the valuable presents which Cortes had received, and the inviting prospects of success that opened to his

[o] B. Diaz. c. 54, 55. Herrera, dec. 2. lib. v. c. 14. Gomara, Cron. c. 96.

view. Every passion which can agitate an ambitious mind; shame, at having been so grossly overreached; indignation, at being betrayed by the man whom he had selected as the object of his favour and confidence; grief, for having wasted his fortune to aggrandize an enemy; and despair of recovering so fair an opportunity of establishing his fame and extending his power, now raged in the bosom of Velasquez. All these, with united force, excited him to make an extraordinary effort in order to be avenged on the author of his wrongs, and to wrest from him his usurped authority and conquests. Nor did he want the appearance of a good title to justify such an attempt. The agent whom he sent to Spain with an account of Grijalva's voyage, had met with a most favourable reception; and from the specimens which he produced, such high expectations were formed concerning the opulence of New Spain, that Velasquez was authorised to prosecute the discovery of the country, and appointed governor of it during life, with more extensive power and privileges than had been granted to any adventurer from the time of Columbus [q]. Elated by this distinguishing mark of favour, and warranted to consider Cortes not only as intruding upon his jurisdiction, but as disobedient to the royal mandate, he determined to vindicate his own rights and the honour of his sovereign by force of arms [r]. His ardour in carrying on his preparations, was such as might have been expected from the violence of the passions with which he was animated; and in a short time an armament was completed, consisting of eighteen ships, which had on board fourscore horsemen, eight hundred foot soldiers, of which eighty were musketeers, and and an hundred and twenty cross-bow men, together with a train of twelve pieces of cannon. As Velasquez's experience of the fatal consequence of com-

[q] Herrera, dec. 2. lib. iii. c. 11.      [r] See NOTE CXV.

mitting to another what he ought to have executed himself, had not rendered him more enterprising, he vested the command of this formidable body, which, in the infancy of the Spanish power in America, merits the appellation of an army, in Pamphilo de Narvaez, with instructions to seize Cortes and his principal officers, to send them prisoners to him, and then to complete the discovery and conquest of the country in his name.

After a prosperous voyage, Narvaez landed his men without opposition near St. Juan de Ullua [April]. Three soldiers, whom Cortes had sent to search for mines in that district, immediately joined him. By this accident, he not only received information concerning the progress and situation of Cortes, but as these soldiers had made some progress in the knowledge of the Mexican language, he acquired interpreters, by whose means he was enabled to hold some intercourse with the people of the country. But, according to the low cunning of deserters, they framed their intelligence with more attention to what they thought would be agreeable, than to what they knew to be true; and represented the situation of Cortes to be so desperate, and the disaffection of his followers to be so general, as increased the natural confidence and presumption of Narvaez. His first operation, however, might have taught him not to rely on their partial accounts. Having sent to summon the governor of Vera Cruz to surrender, Guevara, a priest whom he employed in that service, made the requisition with such insolence, that Sandoval, an officer of high spirit, and zealously attached to Cortes, instead of complying with his demands, seized him and his attendants, and sent them in chains to Mexico.

Cortes received them not like enemies, but as friends, and condemning the severity of Sandoval, set them immediately at liberty. By this well-timed

clemency, seconded by caresses and presents, he gained their confidence, and drew from them such particulars concerning the force and intentions of Narvaez, as gave him a view of the impending danger in its full extent. He had not to contend now with half-naked Indians, no match for him in war, and still more inferior in the arts of policy, but to take the field against an army in courage and martial discipline equal to his own, in number far superior, acting under the sanction of royal authority, and commanded by an officer of known bravery. He was informed that Narvaez, more solicitous to gratify the resentment of Velasquez, than attentive to the honour or interest of his country, had begun his intercourse with the natives, by representing him and his followers as fugitives and outlaws, guilty of rebellion against their own sovereign, and of injustice in invading the Mexican empire ; and had declared that his chief object in visiting the country was to punish the Spaniards who had committed these crimes, and to rescue the Mexicans from oppression. He soon perceived that the same unfavourable representations of his character and actions had been conveyed to Montezuma, and that Narvaez had found means to assure him, that as the conduct of those who kept him under restraint was highly displeasing to the king his master, he had it in charge not only to rescue an injured monarch from confinement, but to reinstate him in the possession of his ancient power and independence. Animated with this prospect of being set free from subjection to strangers, the Mexicans in several provinces began openly to revolt from Cortes, and to regard Narvaez as a deliverer no less able than willing to save them. Montezuma himself kept up a secret intercourse with the new commander, and seemed to court him as a person superior in power and dignity to those

Spaniards whom he had hitherto revered as the first of men [s].

Such were the various aspects of danger and difficulty which presented themselves to the view of Cortes. No situation can be conceived more trying to the capacity and firmness of a general, or where the choice of the plan which ought to be adopted was more difficult. If he should wait the approach of Narvaez in Mexico, destruction seemed to be unavoidable ; for while the Spaniards pressed him from without, the inhabitants, whose turbulent spirit he could hardly restrain with all his authority and attention, would eagerly lay hold on such a favourable opportunity of avenging all their wrongs. If he should abandon the capital, set the captive monarch at liberty, and march out to meet the enemy, he must at once forego the fruits of all his toils and victories, and relinquish advantages which could not be recovered without extraordinary efforts, and infinite danger. If, instead of employing force, he should have recourse to conciliating measures, and attempt an accommodation with Narvaez ; the natural haughtiness of that officer, augmented by consciousness of his present superiority, forbade him to cherish any sanguine hope of success. After revolving every scheme with deep attention, Cortes fixed upon that which in execution was most hazardous, but, if, successful, would prove most beneficial to himself and to his country ; and with the decisive intrepidity suited to desperate situations, determined to make one bold effort for victory under every disadvantage, rather than sacrifice his own conquests and the Spanish interest in Mexico.

But though he foresaw that the contest must be terminated finally by arms, it would have been not only indecent but criminal, to have marched against his countrymen, without attempting to adjust mat-

[s] See NOTE CXVI.

ters by an amicable negociation. In this service he employed Olmedo, his chaplain, to whose character the function was well suited, and who possessed, besides, such prudence and address as qualified him to carry on the secret intrigues in which Cortes placed his chief confidence. Narvaez rejected, with scorn, every scheme of accommodation that Olmedo proposed, and was with difficulty restrained from laying violent hands on him and his attendants. He met, however, with a more favourable reception among the followers of Narvaez, to many of whom he delivered letters, either from Cortes or his officers, their ancient friends and companions. Cortes artfully accompanied these with presents of rings, chains of gold, and other trinkets of value, which inspired those needy adventurers with high ideas of the wealth that he had acquired, and with envy of their good fortune who were engaged in his service. Some, from hopes of becoming sharers in those rich spoils, declared for an immediate accomodation with Cortes. Others, from public spirit, laboured to prevent a civil war, which, whatever party should prevail, must shake, and perhaps subvert the Spanish power, in a country where it was so imperfectly established. Narvaez disregarded both, and by a public proclamation denounced Cortes and his adherents rebels and enemies to their country. Cortes, it is probable, was not much surprised at the untractable arrogance of Narvaez ; and, after having given such a proof of his own pacific disposition as might justify his recourse to other means, he determined to advance towards an enemy whom he had laboured in vain to appease.

He left a hundred and fifty men in the capital [May], under the command of Pedro de Alvarado, an officer of distinguished courage, for whom the Mexicans had conceived a singular degree of respect. To the custody of this slender garrison he committed

a great city, with all the wealth he had amassed, and, what was still of greater importance, the person of the imprisoned monarch. His utmost art was employed in concealing from Montezuma the real cause of his march. He laboured to persuade him, that the strangers who had lately arrived were his friends and fellow-subjects; and that, after a short interview with them, they would depart together, and return to their own country. The captive prince, unable to comprehend the designs of the Spaniards, or to reconcile what he now heard with the declarations of Narvaez, and afraid to discover any symptom of suspicion or distrust of Cortes, promised to remain quietly in the Spanish quarters, and to cultivate the same friendship with Alvarado which he had uniformly maintained with him. Cortes, with seeming confidence in this promise, but relying principally upon the injunctions which he had given Alvarado to guard his prisoner with the most scrupulous vigilance, set out from Mexico.

His strength, even after it was reinforced by the junction of Sandoval and the garrison of Vera Cruz, did not exceed two hundred and fifty men. As he hoped for success chiefly from the rapidity of his motions, his troops were not incumbered either with baggage or artillery. But as he dreaded extremely the impression which the enemy might make with their cavalry, he had provided against this danger with the foresight and sagacity which distinguish a great commander. Having observed that the Indians in the province of Chinantla used spears of extraordinary length and force, he armed his soldiers with these, and accustomed them to that deep and compact arrangement which the use of this formidable weapon, the best perhaps that ever was invented for defence, enabled them to assume.

With this small but firm battalion, Cortes advanced towards Zempoalla, of which Narvaez had taken pos-



session. During his march, he made repeated attempts towards some accomodation with his opponent. But Narvaez requiring that Cortes and his followers should instantly recognize his title to be governor of New Spain, in virtue of the powers which he derived from Velasquez ; and Cortes refusing to submit to any authority which was not founded on a commission from the emperor himself, under whose immediate protection he and his adherents had placed their infant colony ; all these attempts proved fruitless. The intercourse, however, which this occasioned between the two parties, proved of no small advantage to Cortes, as it afforded him an opportunity of gaining some of Narvaez's officers by liberal presents, of softening others by a semblance of moderation, and of dazzling all by the appearance of wealth among his troops, most of his soldiers having converted their share of the Mexican gold into chains, bracelets, and other ornaments, which they displayed with military ostentation. Narvaez and a little junto of his creatures excepted, all the army leaned towards an accommodation with their countrymen. This discovery of their inclination irritated his violent temper almost to madness. In a transport of rage, he set a price upon the head of Cortes, and of his principal officers ; and having learned that he was now advanced within a league of Zempoalla with his small body of men, he considered this as an insult which merited immediate chastisement, and marched out with all his troops to offer him battle.

But Cortes was a leader of greater abilities and experience than, on equal ground, to fight an enemy so far superior in number, and so much better appointed. Having taken his station on the opposite bank of the river de Canoas, where he knew that he could not be attacked, he beheld the approach of the enemy without concern, and disregarded this vain

bravade. It was then the beginning of the wet season [1], and the rain had poured down, during a great part of the day, with the violence peculiar to the torrid zone. The followers of Narvaez, unaccustomed to the hardships of military service, murmured so much at being thus fruitlessly exposed, that, from their unsoldier-like impatience, as well as his own contempt of his adversary, their general permitted them to retire to Zempoalla. The very circumstance which induced them to quit the field, encouraged Cortes to form a scheme, by which he hoped at once to terminate the war. He observed, that his hardy veterans, though standing under the torrents, which continued to fall, without a single tent or any shelter whatsoever to cover them, were so far from repining at hardships which were become familiar to them, that they were still fresh and alert for service. He foresaw that the enemy would naturally give themselves up to repose after their fatigue, and that, judging of the conduct of others by their own effeminacy, they would deem themselves perfectly secure at a season so unfit for action. He resolved, therefore, to fall upon them in the dead of night, when the surprise and terror of this unexpected attack might more than compensate the inferiority of his numbers. His soldiers, sensible that no resource remained but in some desperate effort of courage, approved of the measure with such warmth, that Cortes, in a military oration which he addressed to them before they began their march, was more solicitous to temper than to inflame their ardour. He divided them into three parties. At the head of the first he placed Sandoval; entrusting this gallant officer with the most dangerous and important service, that of seizing the enemy's artillery, which was planted before the principal tower of the temple, where Narvaez had fixed his head-quarters.

[1] Hackluyt, vol. iii. 467. De Laet, Descr. Ind. Occid. 221.

Christoval de Olid commanded the second, with orders to assault the tower, and lay hold on the general. Cortes himself conducted the third and smallest division, which was to act as a body of reserve, and to support the other two as there should be occasion. Having passed the river de Canoas, which was much swelled with the rains, not without difficulty, the water reaching almost to their chins, they advanced in profound silence, without beat of drum, or sound of any warlike instrument; each man armed with his sword, his dagger, and his Chinantlan spear. Narvaez, remiss in proportion to his security, had posted only two centinels to watch the motions of an enemy whom he had such good cause to dread. One of these was seized by the advanced guard of Cortes' troops, the other made his escape, and hurrying to the town with all the precipitation of fear and zeal, gave such timely notice of the enemy's approach, that there was full leisure to have prepared for their reception. But, through the arrogance and infatuation of Narvaez, this important interval was lost. He imputed this alarm to the cowardice of the centinel, and treated with derision the idea of being attacked by forces so unequal to his own. The shouts of Cortes' soldiers, rushing on to the assault, convinced him at last, that the danger which he despised was real. The rapidity with which they advanced was such, that only one cannon could be fired, before Sandoval's party closed with the enemy, drove them from their guns, and began to force their way up the steps of the tower. Narvaez, no less brave in action than presumptuous in conduct, armed himself in haste, and by his voice and example animated his men to the combat. Olid advanced to sustain his companions; and Cortes himself, rushing to the front, conducted and added new vigour to the attack. The compact order in which this small body pressed on, and the impenetrable front which they presented

their long spears, bore down all opposition before them. They had now reached the gate, and were struggling to burst it open, when a soldier having fire to the reeds with which the tower was covered, compelled Narvaez to sally out. In the first encounter he was wounded in the eye with a spear, falling to the ground, was dragged down the steps, and in a moment clapt in fetters. The cry of victory resounded among the troops of Cortes. Those who had sallied out with their leader now maintained the conflict feebly, and began to surrender. Among the remainder of his soldiers, stationed in the smaller towers of the temple, terror and confusion prevailed. The darkness was so great, that they could not distinguish between their friends and enemies. Their own artillery was pointed against them. Whenever they turned their eyes, they beheld lights gleaming through the obscurity of night, which, though proceeding only from a variety of shining objects, that abound in moist and sultry climates, their affrighted imaginations represented as numerous bands of musketeers advancing with kindled matches to the attack. After a short resistance, the soldiers compelled their officers to capitulate, and before long all laid down their arms, and submitted completely to their conquerors.

This complete victory proved more acceptable, as it was gained almost without bloodshed, only two soldiers being killed on the side of Cortes, and two officers, with fifteen private men, of the adverse faction. Cortes treated the vanquished not like enemies, but as countrymen and friends, and offered either to send them directly to Cuba, or to take them into his service, as partners in his fortune, on equal terms with his own soldiers. This latter proposition, seconded by a seasonable distribution of presents from Cortes, and liberal promises of future success, opened prospects so agreeable to the romantic

expectations which had invited them to engage in this service, that all, a few partizans of Narvaez excepted, closed with it, and vied with each other in professions of fidelity and attachment to a general, whose recent success had given them such a striking proof of his abilities for command. Thus, by a series of events no less fortunate than uncommon, Cortes not only escaped from perdition which seemed inevitable, but, when he had least reason to expect it, was placed at the head of a thousand Spaniards; ready to follow wherever he should lead them. Whoever reflects upon the facility with which this victory was obtained, or considers with what sudden and unanimous transition the followers of Narvaez ranged themselves under the standard of his rival, will be apt to ascribe both events as much to the intrigues as to the arms of Cortes, and cannot but suspect that the ruin of Narvaez was occasioned, no less by the treachery of his own followers, than by the valour of his enemy [u].

But, in one point, the prudent conduct and good fortune of Cortes were equally conspicuous. If, by the rapidity of his operations after he began his march, he had not brought matters to such a speedy issue, even this decisive victory would have come too late to have saved his companions whom he left in Mexico. A few days after the discomfiture of Narvaez, a courier arrived with an account that the Mexicans had taken arms, and having seized and destroyed the two brigantines, which Cortes had built in order to secure the command of the lake, and attacked the Spaniards in their quarters, had killed several of them, and wounded more, had reduced to ashes their magazine of provisions, and carried on hostilities with such fury, that, though Alvarado and his men defended themselves with undaunted resolution,

[u] Cortes, Relat. 242. D. B. Diaz. c. 110—125. Herrera, dec. 2. lib. ix. c. 18, &c. Gomara, Cron. c. 97, &c.

they must either be soon cut off by famine, or sink under the multitude of their enemies. This revolt was excited by motives which rendered it still more alarming. On the departure of Cortes for Zempoalla, the Mexicans flattered themselves, that the long expected opportunity of restoring their sovereign to liberty, and of vindicating their country from the odious dominion of strangers, was at length arrived; that while the forces of their oppressors were divided, and the arms of one party turned against the other, they might triumph with greater facility over both. Consultations were held, and schemes formed with this intention. The Spaniards in Mexico, conscious of their own feebleness, suspected and dreaded those machinations. Alvarado, though a gallant officer, possessed neither that extent of capacity, nor dignity of manners, by which Cortes had acquired such an ascendant over the minds of the Mexicans, as never allowed them to form a just estimate of his weakness or of their own strength. Alvarado knew no mode of supporting his authority but force. Instead of employing address to disconcert the plans or to sooth the spirits of the Mexicans, he waited the return of one of their solemn festivals, when the principal persons in the empire were dancing, according to custom, in the court of the great temple; he seized all the avenues which led to it, and, allured partly by the rich ornaments which they wore in honour of their gods, and partly by the facility of cutting off at once the authors of that conspiracy which he dreaded, he fell upon them, unarmed and unsuspecting of any danger, and massacred a great number, none escaping but such as made their way over the battlements of the temple. An action so cruel and treacherous filled not only the city, but the whole empire, with indignation and rage. All called aloud for vengeance; and regardless of the safety of their monarch, whose life was at the mercy of the Spa-

niards, or of their own danger in assaulting an enemy who had been so long the object of their terror, they committed all those acts of violence of which Cortes received an account.

To him the danger appeared so imminent, as to admit neither of deliberation nor delay. He set out instantly with all his forces, and returned from Zempoalla with no less rapidity than he had advanced thither. At Tlascala he was joined by two thousand chosen warriors. On entering the Mexican territories he found that disaffection to the Spaniards was not confined to the capital. The principal inhabitants had deserted the towns through which he passed; no person of note appearing to meet him with the usual respect; no provision was made for the subsistence of his troops; and though he was permitted to advance without opposition, the solitude and silence which reigned in every place, and the horror with which the people avoided all intercourse with him, discovered a deep-rooted antipathy, that excited the most just alarm. But, implacable as the enmity of the Mexicans was, they were so unacquainted with the science of war, that they knew not how to take the proper measures, either for their own safety or the destruction of the Spaniards. Uninstructed by their former error in admitting a formidable enemy into their capital, instead of breaking down the causeways and bridges, by which they might have inclosed Alvarado and his party, and have effectually stopt the career of Cortes, they again suffered him to march into the city [June 24] without molestation, and to take quiet possession of his ancient station.

The transports of joy with which Alvarado and his soldiers received their companions cannot be expressed. Both parties were so much elated, the one with their seasonable deliverance, and the other with the great exploits which they had achieved, that this intoxication of success seems to have reached



Cortes himself; and he behaved on this occasion neither with his usual sagacity nor attention. He not only neglected to visit Montezuma, but imbittered the insult by expressions full of contempt for that unfortunate prince and his people. The forces of which he had now the command, appeared to him so irresistible, that he might assume an higher tone, and lay aside the mask of moderation under which he had hitherto concealed his designs. Some Mexicans, who understood the Spanish language, heard the contemptuous words which Cortes uttered, and reporting them to their countrymen, kindled their rage anew. They were now convinced that the intentions of the general were equally bloody with those of Alvarado, and that his original purpose in visiting their country, had not been, as he pretended, to court the alliance of their sovereign, but to attempt the conquest of his dominions. They resumed their arms with the additional fury which this discovery inspired, attacked a considerable body of Spaniards who were marching towards the great square in which the public market was held, and compelled them to retire with some loss. Emboldened by this success, and delighted to find that their oppressors were not invincible, they advanced next day with extraordinary martial pomp to assault the Spaniards in their quarters. Their number was formidable, and their undaunted courage still more so. Though the artillery pointed against their numerous battalions, crowded together in narrow streets, swept off multitudes at every discharge; though every blow of the Spanish weapons fell with mortal effect upon their naked bodies, the impetuosity of the assault did not abate. Fresh men rushed forward to occupy the places of the slain, and meeting with the same fate, were succeeded by others no less intrepid and eager for vengeance. The utmost effort of Cortes' abilities and experience, seconded by the disci-

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plined valour of his troops, were hardly sufficient to defend the fortifications that surrounded the post where the Spaniards were stationed, into which the enemy were more than once on the point of forcing their way.

Cortes beheld, with wonder, the implacable ferocity of a people who seemed at first to submit tamely to the yoke, and had continued so long passive under it. The soldiers of Narvaez, who fondly imagined that they followed Cortes to share in the spoils of a conquered empire, were astonished to find that they were involved in a dangerous war, with an enemy whose vigour was still unbroken, and loudly execrated their own weakness, in giving such easy credit to the delusive promises of their new leader [x]. But surprise and complaints were of no avail. Some immediate and extraordinary effort was requisite to extricate themselves out of their present situation. As soon as the approach of the evening induced the Mexicans to retire, in compliance with their national custom of ceasing from hostilities with the setting sun, Cortes began to prepare for a sally, next day, with such a considerable force, as might either drive the enemy out of the city, or compel them to listen to terms of accommodation.

He conducted, in person, the troops destined for this important service. Every invention known in the European art of war, as well as every precaution, suggested by his long acquaintance with the Indian mode of fighting, were employed to ensure success. But he found an enemy prepared and determined to oppose him. The force of the Mexicans was greatly augmented by fresh troops which poured in continually from the country, and their animosity was in no degree abated. They were led by their nobles, inflamed by the exhortations of their priests, and fought in defence of their temples and families, under

[x] B. Diaz. c. 126.

the eye of their gods, and in presence of their wives and children. Notwithstanding their numbers, and enthusiastic contempt of danger and death, wherever the Spaniards could close with them, the superiority of their discipline and arms obliged the Mexicans to give way. But in narrow streets, and where many of the bridges of communication were broken down, the Spaniards could seldom come to a fair rencounter with the enemy, and as they advanced, were exposed to showers of arrows and stones from the tops of houses. After a day of incessant exertion, though vast numbers of the Mexicans fell, and part of the city was burnt, the Spaniards, weary with the slaughter, and harassed by multitudes which successively relieved each other, were obliged at length to retire, with the mortification of having accomplished nothing so decisive as to compensate the unusual calamity of having twelve soldiers killed, and above sixty wounded. Another sally, made with greater force, was not more effectual, and in it the general himself was wounded in the hand.

Cortes now perceived, too late, the fatal error into which he had been betrayed by his own contempt of the Mexicans, and was satisfied that he could neither maintain his present station in the centre of an hostile city, nor retire from it without the most imminent danger. One resource still remained, to try what effect the interposition of Montezuma might have to sooth or overawe his subjects. When the Mexicans approached next morning to renew the assault, that unfortunuate prince, at the mercy of the Spaniards, and reduced to the sad necessity of becoming the instrument of his own disgrace, and of the slavery of his people [y], advanced to the battlements in his royal robes, and with all the pomp in which he used to appear on solemn occasions. At sight of their sovereign, whom they had long been

[y] See NOTE CXVII.

accustomed to honour, and almost revere as a god, the weapons dropt from their hands, every tongue was silent, all bowed their heads, and many prostrated themselves on the ground. Montezuma addressed them with every argument that could mitigate their rage, or persuade them to cease from hostilities. When he ended his discourse, a sullen murmur of disapprobation run through the ranks; to this succeeded reproaches and threats; and the fury of the multitude rising in a moment above every restraint of decency or respect, flights of arrows and volleys of stones poured in so violently upon the ramparts, that before the Spanish soldiers, appointed to cover Montezuma with their bucklers, had time to lift them in his defence, two arrows wounded the unhappy monarch, and the blow of a stone on his temple struck him to the ground. On seeing him fall, the Mexicans were so much astonished, that, with a transition not uncommon in popular tumults, they passed in a moment from one extreme to the other, remorse succeeded to insult, and they fled with horror, as if the vengeance of Heaven were pursuing the crime which they had committed. The Spaniards, without molestation, carried Montezuma to his apartments, and Cortes hastened thither to console him under his misfortune. But the unhappy monarch now perceived how low he was sunk, and the haughty spirit which seemed to have been so long extinct, returning, he scorned to survive this last humiliation, and to protract an ignominious life, not only as the prisoner and tool of his enemies, but as the object of contempt or detestation among his subjects. In a transport of rage he tore the bandages from his wounds, and refused, with such obstinacy, to take any nourishment, that he soon ended his wretched days, rejecting with disdain all the solicitations of the Spaniards to embrace the Christian faith.

Upon the death of Montezuma, Cortes having lost all hope of bringing the Mexicans to an accommodation, saw no prospect of safety but in attempting a retreat, and began to prepare for it. But a sudden motion of the Mexicans engaged him in new conflicts. They took possession of a high tower in the great temple which overlooked the Spanish quarters, and placing there a garrison of their principal warriors, not a Spaniard could stir without being exposed to their missile weapons. From this post it was necessary to dislodge them at any risk ; and Juan de Escobar, with a numerous detachment of chosen soldiers, was ordered to make the attack. But Escobar, though a gallant officer, and at the head of troops accustomed to conquer, and who now fought under the eyes of their countrymen, was thrice repulsed. Cortes, sensible that not only the reputation, but the safety of his army depended on the success of this assault, ordered a buckler to be tied to his arm, as he could not manage it with his wounded hand, and rushed with his drawn sword into the thickest of the combatants. Encouraged by the presence of their general, the Spaniards returned to the charge with such vigour, that they gradually forced their way up the steps, and drove the Mexicans to the platform at the top of the tower. There a dreadful carnage began, when two young Mexicans of high rank, observing Cortes as he animated his soldiers by his voice and example, resolved to sacrifice their own lives in order to cut off the author of all the calamities which desolated their country. They approached him in a suppliant posture, as if they had intended to lay down their arms, and seizing him in a moment, hurried him towards the battlements, over which they threw themselves headlong, in hopes of dragging him along to be dashed in pieces by the same fall. But Cortes, by his strength and agility, broke loose from their grasp, and the gallant youths perished in this gener-

ous though unsuccessful attempt to save their country [*y*]. As soon as the Spaniards became masters of the tower, they set fire to it, and, without farther molestation, continued the preparations for their retreat.

This became the more necessary, as the Mexicans were so much astonished at the last effort of the Spanish valour, that they began to change their whole system of hostility, and, instead of incessant attacks, endeavoured, by barricading the streets, and breaking down the causeways, to cut off the communication of the Spaniards with the continent, and thus to starve an enemy whom they could not subdue. The first point to be determined by Cortes and his followers, was, whether they should march out openly in the face of day, when they could discern every danger, and see how to regulate their own motions, as well as how to resist the assaults of the enemy; or, whether they should endeavour to retire secretly in the night? The latter was preferred, partly from hopes that their national superstition would restrain the Mexicans from venturing to attack them in the night, and partly from their own fond belief in the predictions of a private soldier, who having acquired universal credit by a smattering of learning, and his pretensions to astrology, boldly assured his countrymen of success, if they made their retreat in this manner. They began to move, towards midnight, in three divisions. Sandoval led the van; Pedro Alvarado, and Velasquez de Leon, had the conduct of the rear; and Cortes commanded in the centre, where he placed the prisoners, among whom were a son and

[*y*] M. Clavigero has censured me with asperity for relating this gallant action of the two Mexicans, and for supposing that there were battlements round the temple of Mexico. I related the attempt to destroy Cortes on the authority of Herrera, dec. 2. lib. x. c. 9. and of Torquemada, lib. 4. c. 69. I followed them likewise, in supposing the uppermost platform of the temple to be encompassed by a battlement or rail.

two daughters of Montezuma, together with several Mexicans of distinction, the artillery, and a portable bridge of timber, intended, to be laid over the breaches in the causeway. They marched in profound silence along the causeway which led to Tacuba, because it was shorter than any of the rest, and lying most remote from the road towards Tlascala and the sea-coast, had been left more entire by the Mexicans. They reached the first breach in it without molestation, hoping that their retreat was undiscovered.

But the Mexicans, unperceived, had not only watched all their motions with attention, but had made proper dispositions for a most formidable attack. While the Spaniards were intent upon placing their bridge in the breach, and occupied in conducting their horses and artillery along it, they were suddenly alarmed with the tremendous sound of warlike instruments, and a general shout from an innumerable multitude of enemies; the lake was covered with canoes; flights of arrows and showers of stones poured in upon them from every quarter; the Mexicans rushing forward to the charge with fearless impetuosity, as if they hoped in that moment to be avenged for all their wrongs. Unfortunately the wooden bridge, by the weight of the artillery, was wedged so fast into the stones and mud, that it was impossible to remove it. Dismayed at this accident the Spaniards advanced with precipitation towards the second breach. The Mexicans hemmed them in on every side, and though they defended themselves with their usual courage, yet crowded together as they were on a narrow causeway, their discipline and military skill were of little avail, nor did the obscurity of the night permit them to derive great advantage from their fire-arms, or the superiority of their other weapons. All Mexico was now in arms, and so eager were the people on the destruction of their oppressors, that they who were not near enough to

annoy them in person, impatient of the delay, pressed forward with such ardour, as drove on their countrymen in the front with irresistible violence. Fresh warriors instantly filled the place of such as fell. The Spaniards, weary with slaughter, and unable to sustain the weight of the torrent that poured in upon them, began to give way. In a moment the confusion was universal; horse and foot, officers and soldiers, friends and enemies, were mingled together: and while all fought, and many fell, they could hardly distinguish from what hand the blow came.

Cortes, with about a hundred foot soldiers and a few horse, forced his way over the two remaining breaches in the causeway, the bodies of the dead serving to fill up the chasms, and reached the main land. Having formed them as soon as they arrived, he returned with such as were yet capable of service, to assist his friends in their retreat, and to encourage them by his presence and example, to persevere in the efforts requisite to effect it. He met with part of his soldiers, who had broke through the enemy, but found many more overwhelmed by the multitude of their aggressors, or perishing in the lake; and heard the piteous lamentations of others, whom the Mexicans having taken alive, were carrying off in triumph to be sacrificed to the god of war. Before day, all who had escaped assembled at Tacuba. But when the morning dawned, and discovered to the view of Cortes his shattered battalion, reduced to less than half its number, the survivors dejected, and most of them covered with wounds, the thoughts of what they had suffered, and the remembrance of so many faithful friends and gallant followers who had fallen in that night of sorrow [z], pierced his soul with such anguish, that while he was forming their ranks, and issuing some necessary orders, his soldiers

[z] *Noche Triste* is the name by which it is still distinguished in New Spain.



observed the tears trickling from his eyes, and remarked, with much satisfaction, that, while attentive to the duties of a general, he was not insensible to the feelings of a man.

In this fatal retreat many officers of distinction perished [*a*], and among these Velasquez de Leon, who having forsaken the party of his kinsman, the governor of Cuba, to follow the fortune of his companions, was, on that account, as well as for his superior merit, respected by them as the second person in the army. All the artillery, ammunition, and baggage, were lost; the greater part of the horses, and above two thousand Tlascalans, were killed, and only a very small portion of the treasure which they had amassed was saved. This, which had been always their chief object, proved a great cause of their calamity; for many of the soldiers, having so overloaded themselves with bars of gold as rendered them unfit for action, and retarded their flight, fell ignominiously the victims of their own inconsiderate avarice. Amidst so many disasters, it was some consolation to find that Aguilar and Marina, whose function as interpreters was of such essential importance, had made their escape [*b*].

The first care of Cortes was to find some shelter for his wearied troops; for as the Mexicans infested them on every side, and the people of Tacuba began to take arms, he could not continue in his present station. He directed his march towards the rising ground, and having fortunately discovered a temple situated on an eminence, took possession of it. There he found not only the shelter for which he wished, but, what was no less wanted, some provisions to refresh his men; and though the enemy did not intermit their attacks throughout the day, they were

[*a*] See NOTE CXVIII.

[*b*] Cortes, Relat. p. 248. B. Diaz. c. 128. Gomara, Cron. c. 109. Herrera, dec. 2. lib. x. c. 11, 12.



with less difficulty prevented from making any provision. During this time Cortes was engaged in consultation with his officers, concerning the place which they ought to take in their retreat. They were now on the west side of the lake. Tlascalalan was the place where they could hope for a friendly reception. It lay about sixty-four miles to the east of Mexico. So that they were obliged to go round the north end of the lake before they could fall upon it. A Tlascalalan soldier acted as their guide, and conducted them through some places marshy, in others cultivated and thinly peopled. For six days with little respite, they were harassed by numerous bodies of Indians, sometimes harrying them with their missile weapons, sometimes pressing them closely in front, sometimes attacking them by flank, as they now knew the weakness of their position. Nor were the fatigues of the march less than the most arduous conducts the worst of the war. As the barren country they passed afforded hardly any food, they were obliged to feed on berries and green maize; and at the same time, by harassing their spirits, and by the situation required of them, their exertions of courage and strength. In these complicated distresses, Cortes supported and animated the Spaniards, and sustained this sad revolution with his usual magnanimity. His sagacity and foresight, his sagacity and his vigilance provided for every danger, and endured every calamity. The difficulties he was surrounded seemed to call forth his valor. *Aguiar Teatro Americanos, lib. ii. c. 11.*

talents; and his soldiers, though despairing themselves, continued to follow him with increasing confidence in his abilities.

On the sixth day they arrived near to Otumba, not far from the road between Mexico and Tlascala. Early next morning they began to advance towards it, flying parties of the enemy still hanging on their rear; and, amidst the insults with which they accompanied their hostilities, Marina remarked that they often exclaimed with exultation, "Go on, robbers; go to the place where you shall quickly meet the vengeance due to your crimes." The meaning of this threat the Spaniards did not comprehend, until they reached the summit of an eminence before them. There a spacious valley opened to their view, covered with a vast army, extending as far as the eye could reach. The Mexicans, while with one body of their troops they harassed the Spaniards in their retreat, had assembled their principal force on the other side of the lake; and marching along the road which led directly to Tlascala, posted it in the plain of Otumba, through which they knew Cortes must pass.

At the sight of this incredible multitude, which they could survey at once from the rising ground, the Spaniards were astonished, and even the boldest began to despair. But Cortes, without allowing leisure for their fears to acquire strength by reflection, after warning them briefly that no alternative now remained but to conquer or to die, led them instantly to the charge. The Mexicans waited their approach with unusual fortitude. Such, however, was the superiority of the Spanish discipline and arms, that the impression of this small body was irresistible; and which ever way its force was directed, it penetrated and dispersed the most numerous battalions. But while these gave way in one quarter, new combatants advanced from another, and the Spaniards, though successful in every attack, were

ready to sink under those repeated efforts, without seeing any end of their toil, or any hope of victory. At that time Cortes observed the great standard of the empire, which was carried before the Mexican general, advancing; and fortunately recollecting to have heard, that on the fate of it depended the event of every battle, he assembled a few of his bravest officers, whose horses were still capable of service, and placing himself at their head, pushed forward towards the standard with an impetuosity which bore down every thing before it. A chosen body of nobles, who guarded the standard, made some resistance, but were soon broken. Cortes, with a stroke of his lance, wounded the Mexican general, and threw him to the ground. One of the Spanish officers alighting, put an end to his life, and laid hold of the imperial standard. The moment that their leader fell, and the standard, towards which all directed their eyes, disappeared, an universal panic struck the Mexicans, and, as if the bond which held them together had been dissolved, every ensign was lowered, each soldier threw away his weapons, and all fled with precipitation to the mountains. The Spaniards, unable to pursue them far, returned to collect the spoils of the field, which were so valuable, as to be some compensation for the wealth which they had lost in Mexico; for in the enemy's army were most of their principal warriors, dressed out in their richest ornaments, as if they had been marching to assured victory. Next day [July 8], to their great joy, they entered the Tlascalan territories [*d*].

But, amidst their satisfaction in having got beyond the precincts of an hostile country, they could not look forward without solicitude, as they were still uncertain what reception they might meet with from allies, to whom they returned in a condition very

[*d*] Cortes, Relat. p. 219. B. Diaz. c. 128. Gomara, Cron. c. 100. Herrera, dec. 2. lib. x. c. 12, 13.

different from that in which they had lately set out from their dominions. Happily for them, the enmity of the Tlascalans to the Mexican name was so inveterate, their desire to avenge the death of their countrymen so vehement, and the ascendant which Cortes had acquired over the chiefs of the republic so complete, that, far from entertaining a thought of taking any advantage of the distressed situation in which they beheld the Spaniards, they received them with a tenderness and cordiality which quickly dissipated all their suspicions.

Some interval of tranquillity and indulgence was now absolutely necessary; not only that the Spaniards might give attention to the cure of their wounds, which had been too long neglected, but in order to recruit their strength, exhausted by such a long succession of fatigue and hardships. During this, Cortes learned that he and his companions were not the only Spaniards who had felt the effects of the Mexican enmity. A considerable detachment, which was marching from Zempoalla towards the capital, had been cut off by the people of Tepeaca. A smaller party, returning from Tlascala to Vera Cruz, with the share of the Mexican gold allotted to the garrison, had been surprised and destroyed in the mountains. At a juncture when the life of every Spaniard was of importance, such losses were deeply felt. The schemes which Cortes was meditating rendered them peculiarly afflictive to him. While his enemies, and even many of his own followers considered the disasters which had befallen him as fatal to the progress of his arms, and imagined that nothing now remained but speedily to abandon a country which he had invaded with unequal force, his mind, as eminent for perseverance as for enterprise, was still bent on accomplishing his original purpose, of subjecting the Mexican empire to the crown of Castile. Severe and unexpected as the check was which he had received,

it did not appear to him a sufficient reason for relinquishing the conquests which he had already made, or against resuming his operations with better hopes of success. The colony at Vera Cruz was not only safe, but had remained unmolested.—The people of Zempoalla and the adjacent districts had discovered no symptoms of defection. The Tlascalans continued faithful to their alliance. On their martial spirit, easily roused to arms, and inflamed with implacable hatred of the Mexicans, Cortes depended for powerful aid. He had still the command of a body of Spaniards, equal in number to that which he had opened his way into the centre of the empire, and had taken possession of the capital; that with the benefit of greater experience, and a more perfect knowledge of the country, he was not in despair of quickly recovering all that he had been deprived of by untoward events.

Full of this idea, he courted the Tlascalans with such attention, and distributed among them liberally the rich spoils of Otumba, that he was enabled to obtain whatever he should require from the public. He drew a small supply of arms, and two or three field-pieces, from his store at Vera Cruz. He dispatched an officer of confidence to four ships of Narvaez's fleet to Hispaniola, to engage adventurers, and to purchase gunpowder, and other military stores. He was so confident that it would be vain to attempt the conquest of Mexico, unless he could secure the command of the lake, he gave orders to prepare, in the province of Tlascala, materials for building twelve galleons, so as they might be carried thither in fragments to be put together, and launched when the need of their service [e].

But while, with provident attention, he took those necessary steps towards the expedition,

[e] Cortes, Relat. p. 253. E. Gomara, C.

measures, an obstacle arose in a quarter where it was least expected, but most formidable. The spirit of discontent and mutiny broke out in his own army. Many of Narvaez's followers were planters rather than soldiers, and had accompanied him to New Spain with sanguine hopes of obtaining settlements, with little inclination to engage in the hardships and dangers of war. As the same motives had induced them to enter into their new engagements with the service, than they bitterly repented of the perilous adventures in which their imprudence had involved them, happy in the idea of their escape, trembled at the thoughts of a second time to similar calamities. They discovered the intention of Cortes, secretly to murmur and cabal, and waxing more audacious, they, in a body, offered a revolt to their general against the imprudence of a powerful empire with his shattered band. Though Cortes, long practised in command, employed arguments, intreaties, and promises to convince or to soothe them; though he seconded his endeavours; he found his eloquence and deep-rooted to be removed, and his eloquence could effect was to prevail with their departure for some time, on a point which he could, at a more proper juncture, could desire it.

Contentments might have no leisure to arise of their disaffection, he called forth his troops and the people of Tepic, who they had committed, and they had cut off his

composed mostly of soldiers who had served under Narvaez, their companions, from the desire of vengeance, engaged the more willingly in this war. He took the command in person [August], accompanied by a numerous body of Tlascalans, and in the space of a few weeks, after various encounters, with great slaughter of the Tepeacans, reduced that province to subjection. During several months, while he waited for the supplies of men and ammunition which he expected, and was carrying on his preparations for constructing the brigantines, he kept his troops constantly employed in various expeditions against the adjacent provinces, all of which were conducted with an uniform tenor of success. By these, his men became again accustomed to victory, and resumed their wonted sense of superiority; the Mexican power was weakened, the Tlascalan warriors acquired the habit of acting in conjunction with the Spaniards; and the chiefs of the republic delighted to see their country enriched with the spoils of all the people around them, and astonished every day with fresh discoveries of the irresistible prowess of their allies, they declined no effort requisite to support them.

All those preparatory arrangements, however, though the most prudent and efficacious which the situation of Cortes allowed him to make, would have been of little avail, without a reinforcement of Spanish soldiers. Of this he was so deeply sensible, that it was the chief object of his thoughts and wishes; and yet his only prospect of obtaining it from the return of the officer whom he had sent to the isles to solicit aid, was both distant and uncertain. But what neither his own sagacity nor power could have procured, he owed to a series of fortunate and unforeseen incidents. The governor of Cuba, to whom the success of Narvaez appeared an event of infallible certainty, having sent too small ships

after him with new instructions, and a supply of men and military stores, the officer whom Cortes had appointed to command on the coast, artfully decoyed them into the harbour of Vera Cruz, seized the vessels, and easily persuaded the soldiers to follow the standard of a more able leader than him whom they were destined to join [*f*]. Soon after, three ships of more considerable force came into the harbour separately. These belonged to an armament fitted out by Francisco de Garay, governor of Jamaica, who, being possessed with the rage of discovery and conquest which animated every Spaniard settled in America, had long aimed at intruding into some district of New Spain, and dividing with Cortes the glory and gain of annexing that empire to the crown of Castile. They unadvisedly made their attempt on the northern provinces, where the country was poor, and the people fierce and warlike; and, after a cruel succession of disasters, famine compelled them to venture into Vera Cruz, and cast themselves upon the mercy of their countrymen [Oct. 28]. Their fidelity was not proof against the splendid hopes and promises which had seduced other adventurers, and, as if the spirit of revolt had been contagious in New Spain, they likewise abandoned the master whom they were bound to serve, and enlisted under Cortes [*g*]. Nor was it America alone that furnished such unexpected aid. A ship arrived from Spain, freighted by some private merchants with military stores, in hopes of a profitable market in a country, the fame of whose opulence begun to spread over Europe. Cortes eagerly purchased a cargo which to him was invaluable, and the crew, following the general example, joined him at Tlascala [*h*].

From those various quarters, the army of Cortes was augmented with an hundred and eighty men,

[*f*] B. Diaz. c. 231. [*g*] Cortes, Relat. 253. F. B. Diaz. c. 133. [*h*] Ibid. c. 136.



and twenty horses, a reinforcement too inconsiderable to produce any consequence which would entitle it to have been mentioned in the history of other parts of the globe. But in that of America, where great revolutions were brought about by causes which seemed to bear no proportion to their effects, such small events rise into importance, because they were sufficient to decide with respect to the fate of kingdoms. Nor is it the least remarkable instance of the singular felicity conspicuous in many passages of Cortes' story, that the two persons chiefly instrumental in furnishing him with those seasonable supplies, should be an avowed enemy who aimed at his destruction, and an envious rival who wished to supplant him.

The first effect of the junction with his new followers was to enable him to dismiss such of Narvaez's soldiers as remained with reluctance in his service. After their departure, he still mustered five hundred and fifty infantry, of which fourscore were armed with muskets or cross-bows, forty horsemen, and a train of nine field-pieces [*i*]. At the head of these, accompanied by ten thousand Tlascalans and other friendly Indians, Cortes began his march towards Mexico, on the twenty-eighth of December, six months after his disastrous retreat from that city [*k*].

Nor did he advance to attack an enemy unprepared to receive him. Upon the death of Montezuma, the Mexican chiefs, in whom the right of electing the emperor was vested, had instantly raised his brother Quetlavaca to the throne. His avowed and inveterate enmity to the Spaniards would have been sufficient to gain their suffrages, although he had been less distinguished for courage and capacity. He had an immediate opportunity of shewing that he was worthy of their choice, by conducting, in per-

[*i*] Cortes, Relat. 255. E.

[*k*] Relat. 256. A. B. Diaz. c. 137.

son, those fierce attacks which compelled the Spaniards to abandon his capital ; and as soon as their retreat afforded him any respite from action, he took measures for preventing their return to Mexico, with prudence equal to the spirit which he had displayed in driving them out of it. As from the vicinity of Tlascala, he could not be unacquainted with the motions and intentions of Cortes, he observed the storm that was gathering, and began early to provide against it. He repaired what the Spaniards had ruined in the city, and strengthened it with such new fortifications as the skill of his subjects was capable of erecting. Beside filling his magazines with the usual weapons of war, he gave directions to make long spears headed with the swords and daggers taken from the Spaniards, in order to annoy the cavalry. He summoned the people in every province of the empire to take arms against their oppressors, and as an encouragement to exert themselves with vigour, he promised them exemption from all the taxes which his predecessors had imposed [l]. But what he laboured with the greatest earnestness was, to deprive the Spaniards of the advantages which they derived from the friendship of the Tlascalians, by endeavouring to persuade that people to renounce all connection with men, who were not only avowed enemies of the gods whom they worshipped, but who would not fail to subject them at last to the same yoke, which they were now inconsiderately lending their aid to impose upon others. These representations, no less striking than well founded, were urged so forcibly by his ambassadors, that it required all the address of Cortes to prevent their making a dangerous impression [m].

But while Quetlavaca was arranging his plan of defence, with a degree of foresight, uncommon in an

[l] Cortes, Relat. p. 253. E. 254. A. B. Diaz. c. 140.

[m] B. Diaz. c. 129. Herrera, dec. 2. lib. x. c. 14. 19.

American, his days were cut short by the small-pox. This distemper, which raged at that time in New Spain with fatal malignity, was unknown in that quarter of the globe, until it was introduced by the Europeans, and may be reckoned among the greatest calamities brought upon them by their invaders. In his stead the Mexicans raised to the throne Guatimozin, nephew and son-in-law to Montezuma, a young man of such high reputation for abilities and valour, that in this dangerous crisis, his countrymen, with one voice, called him to the supreme command [*n*].

1521.] As soon as Cortes entered the enemy's territories, he discovered various preparations to obstruct his progress. But his troops forced their way with little difficulty, and took possession of Tezeuco, the second city of the empire, situated on the banks of the lake about twenty miles from Mexico [*o*]. Here he determined to establish his head-quarters, as the most proper station for launching his brigantines, as well as for making his approaches to the capital. In order to render his residence there more secure, he deposed the cazique or chief, who was at the head of that community, under pretext of some defect in his title, and substituted in his place a person whom a faction of the nobles pointed out as the right heir of that dignity. Attached to him by this benefit, the new cazique and his adherents served the Spaniards with inviolable fidelity [*p*].

As the preparations for constructing the brigantines advanced slowly under the unskilful hands of soldiers and Indians, whom Cortes was obliged to employ in assisting three or four carpenters, who happened fortunately to be in his service, and as he had not yet received the reinforcement which he ex-

[*n*] B. Diaz. c. 130. [*o*] Villa Senor Teatro Americano, i. 156. [*p*] Cortes, Relat. 256, &c. B. Diaz. c. 137. Gomara, Cron. c. 121. Herrera, dec. 3. c. 1.

pected from Hispaniola, he was not in a condition to turn his arms directly against the capital. To have attacked, at this period, a city so populous, so well prepared for defence, and in a situation of such peculiar strength, must have exposed his troops to inevitable destruction. Three months elapsed before the materials for the brigantines were finished, and before he heard any thing with respect to the success of the officer whom he had sent to Hispaniola. This, however, was not a season of inaction to Cortes. He attacked successively several of the towns situated around the lake ; and though all the Mexican power was exerted to obstruct his operations, he either compelled them to submit to the Spanish crown, or reduced them to ruins. The inhabitants of other towns he endeavoured to conciliate by more gentle means, and though he could not hold any intercourse with them but by the intervention of interpreters, yet under all the disadvantage of that tedious and imperfect mode of communication, he had acquired such thorough knowledge of the state of the country, as well as of the dispositions of the people, that he conducted his negotiations and intrigues with astonishing dexterity and success. Most of the cities adjacent to Mexico were originally the capitals of small independent states ; and some of them having been but lately annexed to the Mexican empire, still retained the remembrance of their ancient liberty, and bore with impatience the rigorous yoke of their new masters. Cortes having early observed symptoms of their disaffection, availed himself of this knowledge to gain their confidence and friendship. By offering, with confidence, to deliver them from the odious dominion of the Mexicans, and by liberal promises of more indulgent treatment, if they would unite with him against their oppressors, he prevailed on the people of several considerable districts, not only to acknowledge the king of Castile as their so-

vereign, but to supply the Spanish camp with provisions, and to strengthen his army with auxiliary troops. Guatimozin, on the first appearance of defection among his subjects, exerted himself with vigour to prevent or to punish their revolt; but in spite of his efforts, the spirit continued to spread. The Spaniards gradually acquired new allies, and with deep concern he beheld Cortes arming against this empire those very hands which ought to have been active in its defence; and ready to advance against the capital at the head of a numerous body of his own subjects [q].

While, by those various methods, Cortes was gradually circumscribing the Mexican power in such a manner that his prospect of overturning it seemed neither to be uncertain nor remote, all his schemes were well nigh defeated, by a conspiracy no less unexpected than dangerous. The soldiers of Narvaez had never united perfectly with the original companions of Cortes, nor did they enter into his measures with the same cordial zeal. Upon every occasion that required any extraordinary effort of courage or of patience, their spirits were apt to sink; and now, on a near view of what they had to encounter, in attempting to reduce a city so inaccessible as Mexico, and defended by a numerous army, the resolution even of those among them who had adhered to Cortes when he was deserted by their associates, began to fail. Their fears led them to presumptuous and unsoldier-like discussions concerning the propriety of their general's measures, and the improbability of their success. From these they proceeded to censure and invectives, and at last began to deliberate how they might provide for their own safety, of which they deemed their commander to be totally negligent. Antonio Villefagna, a private

[q] Cortes, Relat. 256—260. B. Diaz. c. 137—140. Gomara, Cron. c. 122, 123. Herrera, dec. 3. lib. i. c. 1, 2.

soldier, but bold, intriguing, and strongly attached to Velasquez, artfully fomented this growing spirit of disaffection. His quarters became the rendezvous of the malcontents, where, after many consultations, they could discover no method of checking Cortes in his career, but by assassinating him and his most considerable officers, and conferring the command upon some person who would relinquish his wild plans, and adopt measures more consistent with the general security. Despair inspired them with courage. The hour for perpetrating the crime, the persons whom they destined as victims, the officers to succeed them in command, were all named; and the conspirators signed an association, by which they bound themselves with most solemn oaths to mutual fidelity. But on the evening before the appointed day, one of Cortes' ancient followers, who had been seduced into the conspiracy, touched with compunction at the imminent danger of a man whom he had long been accustomed to revere, or struck with horror at his own treachery, went privately to his general, and revealed to him all that he knew. Cortes, though deeply alarmed, discerned at once what conduct was proper in a situation so critical. He repaired instantly to Villefagna's quarters, accompanied by some of his most trusty officers. The astonishment and confusion of the man at this unexpected visit anticipated the confession of his guilt. Cortes, while his attendants seized the traitor, snatched from his bosom a paper containing the association, signed by the conspirators. Impatient to know how far the defection extended, he retired to read it, and found there names which filled him with surprise and sorrow. But, aware how dangerous a strict scrutiny might prove at such a juncture, he confined his judicial inquiries to Villefagna alone. As the proofs of his guilt were manifest, he was condemned after a short trial, and next morning he was seen hanging before the

door of the house in which he had lodged. Cortes called his troops together, and having explained to them the atrocious purpose of the conspirators, as well as the justice of the punishment inflicted on Villefagna, he added, with an appearance of satisfaction, that he was entirely ignorant with respect to all the circumstances of this dark transaction, as the traitor, when arrested, had suddenly torn and swallowed a paper which probably contained an account of it, and under the severest tortures possessed such constancy as to conceal the names of his accomplices. This artful declaration restored tranquillity to many a breast that was throbbing, while he spoke, with consciousness of guilt and dread of detection; and by this prudent moderation, Cortes had the advantage of having discovered, and of being able to observe such of his followers as were disaffected; while they, flattering themselves that their past crime was unknown, endeavoured to avert any suspicion of it, by redoubling their activity and zeal in his service [r].

Cortes did not allow them leisure to ruminate on what had happened; and as the most effectual means of preventing the return of a mutinous spirit, he determined to call forth his troops immediately to action. Fortunately, a proper occasion for this occurred without his seeming to court it. He received intelligence that the materials for building the brigantines were at length completely finished, and waited only for a body of Spaniards to conduct them to Tezeuco. The command of this convoy, consisting of two hundred foot soldiers, fifteen horsemen, and two field pieces, he gave to Sandoval, who, by the vigilance, activity, and courage, which he manifested on every occasion, was growing daily in his confidence, and in the estimation of his fellow-soldiers. The service was no less singular than important; the beams,

[r] Cortes, Relat. 283. C. B. Diaz. c. 146. Herrera, dec. 3. lib. i. c. 1.



the planks, the masts, the cordage, the sails, the iron-work, and all the infinite variety of articles requisite for the construction of thirteen brigantines, were to be carried sixty miles over land, through a mountainous country, by people who were unacquainted with the ministry of domestic animals, or the aid of machines to facilitate any work of labour. The Tlascalans furnished eight thousand *Tamenes*, an inferior order of men destined for servile tasks, to carry the materials on their shoulders, and appointed fifteen thousand warriors to accompany and defend them. Sandoval made the disposition for their progress with great propriety, placing the *Tamenes* in the centre, one body of warriors in the front, another in the rear, with considerable parties to cover the flanks. To each of these he joined some Spaniards, not only to assist them in danger, but to accustom them to regularity and subordination. A body so numerous, and so much encumbered, advanced leisurely, but in excellent order; and in some places, where it was confined by the woods or mountains, the line of march extended above six miles. Parties of Mexicans frequently appeared hovering around them on the high grounds; but perceiving no prospect of success in attacking an enemy continually on his guard, and prepared to receive them, they did not venture to molest them; and Sandoval had the glory of conducting safely to Tezeuco, a convoy on which all the future operations of his countrymen depended [s].

This was followed by another event of no less moment. Four ships arrived at Vera Cruz from Hispaniola, with two hundred soldiers, eighty horses, two battering cannon, and a considerable supply of ammunition and arms [t]. Elevated with observing that all his preparatory schemes, either for recruiting his own army, or impairing the force of the enemy,

[s] Cortes, Relat. 260. C. E. B. Diaz. c. 140.

[t] Cortes, Relat. 252. F. 262. D. Gomara, Cron. c. 129.



had now produced their full effect, Cortes, impatient to begin the siege in form, hastened the launching of the brigantines. To facilitate this, he had employed a vast number of Indians for two months in deepening the small rivulet which runs by Tezeuco into the lake, and in forming it into a canal near two miles in length [*u*]; and though the Mexicans, aware of his intentions, as well as of the danger which threatened them, endeavoured frequently to interrupt the labourers, or to burn the brigantines, the work was at last completed [*x*]. On the twenty-eight of April, all the Spanish troops, together with the auxiliary Indians, were drawn up on the banks of the canal; and with extraordinary military pomp, rendered more solemn by the celebration of the most sacred rites of religion, the brigantines were launched. As they fell down the canal in order, Father Olmedo blessed them, and gave each its name. Every eye followed them with wonder and hope, until they entered the lake, when they hoisted their sails, and bore away before the wind. A general shout of joy was raised; all admiring that bold inventive genius, which, by means so extraordinary that their success almost exceeded belief, had acquired the command of a fleet, without the aid of which Mexico would have continued to set the Spanish power and arms at defiance [*y*].

Cortes determined to attack the city from three different quarters; from Tepeaca on the north side of the lake, from Tacuba on the west, and from Cuyoacan towards the south. Those towns were situated on the principal causeways which led to the capital, and intended for their defence. He appointed Sandoval to command in the first, Pedro de Alvarado in the second, and Christoval de Olid in the

[*u*] See NOTE CXIX.

[*x*] B. Diaz. c. 140.

[*y*] Cortes, Relat. 266. C. Herrera, dec. 3. lib. i. c. 5. Gomara, Cron. c. 129.

third; allotting to each a numerous body of Indian auxiliaries, together with an equal division of Spaniards, who by the junction of the troops from Hispaniola, amounted now to eighty-six horsemen, and eight hundred and eighteen foot soldiers; of whom one hundred and eighteen were armed with muskets or cross-bows. The train of artillery consisted of three battering cannon, and fifteen field-pieces [z]. He reserved for himself, as the station of greatest importance and danger, the conduct of the brigantines, each armed with one of his small cannon, and manned with twenty-five Spaniards.

As Alvarado and Olid proceeded towards the posts assigned them [May 10], they broke down the aqueducts which the ingenuity of the Mexicans had erected for conveying water into the capital, and by the distress to which this reduced the inhabitants, gave a beginning to the calamities which they were destined to suffer [a]. Alvarado and Olid found the towns of which they were ordered to take possession deserted by their inhabitants, who had fled for safety to the capital, where Guatimozin had collected the chief force of his empire, as there alone he could hope to make a successful stand against the formidable enemies who were approaching to assault him.

The first effort of the Mexicans was to destroy the fleet of brigantines, the fatal effects of whose operations they foresaw and dreaded. Though the brigantines, after all the labour and merit of Cortes in forming them, were of inconsiderable bulk, rudely constructed, and manned chiefly with land-men, hardly possessed of skill enough to conduct them, they must have been objects of terror to a people unacquainted with any navigation but that of their lake, and possessed of no vessel larger than a canoe. Necessity, however, urged Guatimozin to hazard the

[z] Cortes, Relat. 266. C.      [a] Cortes, Relat. 237. B.  
B. Diaz. c. 150.    Herrera, dec. 3. lib. i. c. 13.

attack; and hoping to supply by numbers what he wanted in force, he assembled such a multitude of canoes as covered the face of the lake. They rowed on boldly to the charge, while the brigantines, retarded by a dead calm, could scarcely advance to meet them. But as the enemy drew near, a breeze suddenly sprung up; in a moment the sails were spread, the brigantines, with the utmost ease, broke through their feeble opponents, upset many canoes, and dissipated the whole armament with such slaughter, as convinced the Mexicans, that the progress of the Europeans in knowledge and arts rendered their superiority greater on this new element, than they had hitherto found it by land [b].

From that time Cortes remained master of the lake, and the brigantines, not only preserved a communication between the Spaniards in their different stations, though at considerable distance from each other, but were employed to cover the causeways on each side, and keep off the canoes, when they attempted to annoy the troops as they advanced towards the city. Cortes formed the brigantines in three divisions, appointing one to cover each of the stations from which an attack was to be carried on against the city, with orders to second the operations of the officer who commanded there. From all the three stations he pushed on the attack against the city with equal vigour; but in a manner so very different from the conduct of sieges in regular war, that he himself seems afraid it would appear no less improper than singular, to persons unacquainted with his situation [c]. Each morning his troops assaulted the barricades which the enemy had erected on the causeways, forced their way over the trenches which they had dug, and through the canals where

[b] Cortes, Relat. 267. C. B. Diaz. c. 150. Gomara, Cron. c. 131. Herrera, dec. 2. lib. i. c. 17.

[c] Cortes, Relat. 270. F.

the bridges were broken down, and endeavoured to penetrate into the heart of the city, in hopes of obtaining some decisive advantage, which might force the enemy to surrender, and terminate the war at once ; but when the obstinate valour of the Mexicans rendered the efforts of the day ineffectual, the Spaniards retired in the evening to their former quarters. Thus their toil and danger were, in some measure, continually renewed ; the Mexicans repairing in the night what the Spaniards had destroyed through the day, and recovering the posts from which they had driven them. But necessity prescribed this slow and untoward mode of operation. The number of his troops was so small, that Cortes durst not, with a handful of men, attempt to make lodgment in a city where he might be surrounded and annoyed by such a multitude of enemies. The remembrance of what he had already suffered by the ill-judged confidence with which he had ventured into such a dangerous situation, was still fresh in his mind. The Spaniards, exhausted with fatigue, were unable to guard the various posts which they daily gained ; and though their camp was filled with Indian auxiliaries, they durst not devolve this charge on them, because they were so little accustomed to discipline, that no confidence could be placed in their vigilance. Besides this, Cortes was extremely anxious to preserve the city as much as possible from being destroyed, both because he destined it to be the capital of his conquests, and wished that it should remain as a monument of his glory. From these considerations, he adhered obstinately, for a long time after the siege was opened, to the system of operations he had adopted. The Mexicans, in their own defence, displayed valour which was hardly inferior to that with which the Spaniards attacked them. On the water, by night and by day, one furious assault succeeded to another. Several Spaniards

were killed, more wounded, and all were ready to sink under the toils of unintermitting service, which were rendered more intolerable by the injuries of the season, the periodical rains being now set in with their usual violence [*d*].

Astonished and disconcerted with the length and difficulties of the siege, Cortes determined to make one great effort to get possession of the city, before he relinquished the plan which he had hitherto followed, and had recourse to any other mode of attack. With this view, he sent instructions to Alvarado and Sandoval to advance with their divisions to a general assault, and took the command in person [July 3] of that posted on the causeway of Cuyocan. Animated by his presence, and the expectation of some decisive event, the Spaniards pushed forward with irresistible impetuosity. They broke through one barricade after another, forced their way over the ditches and canals, and having entered the city, gained ground incessantly, in spite of the multitude and ferocity of their opponents. Cortes, though delighted with the rapidity of his progress, did not forget that he might still find it necessary to retreat; and in order to secure it, appointed Julien de Alderete, a captain of chief note in the troops which he had received from Hispaniola, to fill up the canals and gaps in the causeway as the main body advanced. That officer, deeming it inglorious to be thus employed, while his companions were in the heat of action and the career of victory, neglected the important charge committed to him, and hurried on, inconsiderately, to mingle with the combatants. The Mexicans, whose military attention and skill were daily improving, no sooner observed this, than they carried an account of it to their monarch.

Guatimozin instantly discerned the consequence of the error which the Spaniards had committed,

[*d*] B. Diaz. c. 151.

and, with admirable presence of mind, prepared to take advantage of it. He commanded the troops posted in the front to slacken their efforts, in order to allure the Spaniards to push forward, while he dispatched a large body of chosen warriors through different streets, some by land, and others by water, towards the great breach in the causeway, which had been left open. On a signal which he gave, the priests in the principal temple struck the great drum consecrated to the god of war. No sooner did the Mexicans hear its doleful solemn sound, calculated to inspire them with contempt of death and enthusiastic ardour, than they rushed upon the enemy with frantic rage. The Spaniards, unable to resist men urged on no less by religious fury than hope of success, began to retire, at first leisurely, and with a good countenance; but as the enemy pressed on, and their own impatience to escape increased, the terror and confusion became so general, that when they arrived at the gap in the causeway, Spaniards and Tlascalans, horsemen and infantry, plunged in promiscuously, while the Mexicans rushed upon them fiercely from every side, their light canoes carrying them through shoals which the brigantines could not approach. In vain did Cortes attempt to stop and rally his flying troops; fear rendered them regardless of his entreaties or commands. Finding all his endeavours to renew the combat fruitless, his next care was to save some of those who had thrown themselves into the water; but while thus employed, with more attention to their situation than to his own, six Mexican captains suddenly laid hold of him, and were hurrying him off in triumph; and though two of his officers rescued him at the expence of their own lives, he received several dangerous wounds before he could break loose. Above sixty Spaniards perished in the rout; and what rendered the disaster more afflicting, forty of these fell alive

into the hand of an enemy never known to shew mercy to a captive [e].

The approach of night, though it delivered the dejected Spaniards from the attacks of the enemy, ushered in, what was hardly less grievous, the noise of their barbarous triumph, and of the horrid festival with which they celebrated their victory. Every quarter of the city was illuminated; the great temple shone with such peculiar splendour, that the Spaniards could plainly see the people in motion, and the priests busy in hastening the preparations for the death of the prisoners. Through the gloom, they fancied that they discerned their companions by the whiteness of their skins, as they were stript naked and compelled to dance before the image of the god to whom they were to be offered. They heard the shrieks of those who were sacrificed, and thought that they could distinguish each unhappy victim, by the well-known sound of his voice. Imagination added to what they really saw or heard, and augmented its horror. The most unfeeling melted into tears of compassion, and the stoutest heart trembled at the dreadful spectacle which they beheld [f].

Cortes, who, besides all that he felt in common with his soldiers, was oppressed with the additional load of anxious reflections natural to a general on such an unexpected calamity, could not, like them, relieve his mind by giving vent to its anguish. He was obliged to assume an air of tranquillity, in order to revive the spirit and hopes of his followers. The juncture, indeed, required an extraordinary exertion of fortitude. The Mexicans, elated with their victory, sallied out next morning to attack him in his quarters. But they did not rely on the efforts of their own arms alone. They sent the heads of the Spaniards whom they had sacrificed, to the leading men

[e] Cortes, Relat. p. 273. B. Díaz. c. 152. Gomara, Cron. c. 138. Herrera, dec. 3. lib. i. c. 20. [f] See NOTE CXX.

in the adjacent provinces, and assured them that the god of war, appeased by the blood of their invaders, which had been shed so plentifully on his altars, had declared with an audible voice, that in eight days time those hated enemies should be finally destroyed, and peace and prosperity re-established in the empire.

A prediction uttered with such confidence, and in terms so void of ambiguity, gained universal credit among a people prone to superstition. The zeal of the provinces, which had already declared against the Spaniards, augmented; and several which had hitherto remained inactive, took arms, with enthusiastic ardour, to execute the decree of the gods. The Indian auxiliaries who had joined Cortes, accustomed to venerate the same deities, with the Mexicans, and to receive the responses of their priests with the same implicit faith, abandoned the Spaniards as a race of men devoted to certain destruction. Even the fidelity of the Tlascalans was shaken, and the Spanish troops were left almost alone in their stations. Cortes, finding that he attempted in vain to dispel the superstitious fears of his confederates by argument, took advantage, from the imprudence of those who had framed the prophecy, in fixing its accomplishment so near at hand, to give a striking demonstration of its falsity. He suspended all military operations during the period marked out by the oracle. Under cover of the brigantines, which kept the enemy at a distance, his troops lay in safety, and the fatal term expired without any disaster [*g*].

Many of his allies, ashamed of their own credulity, returned to their station. Other tribes, judging that the gods who had now deceived the Mexicans, had decreed finally to withdraw their protection from them, joined his standard; and such was the levity of a simple people, moved by every slight impression, that in a short time after such a general defection of

[*g*] B. Diaz. c. 153. Gomara, Cron. c. 138.



his confederates, Cortes saw himself, if we may believe his own account, at the head of a hundred and fifty thousand Indians. Even with such a numerous army, he found it necessary to adopt a new and more wary system of operation. Instead of renewing his attempts to become master of the city at once, by such bold but dangerous efforts of valour as he had already tried, he made his advances gradually, and with every possible precaution against exposing his men to any calamity similar to that which they still bewailed. As the Spaniards pushed forward, the Indians regularly repaired the causeways behind them. As soon as they got possession of any part of the town, the houses were instantly levelled with the ground. Day by day, the Mexicans, forced to retire as their enemies gained ground, were hemmed in within more narrow limits. Guatimozin, though unable to stop the career of the enemy, continued to defend his capital with obstinate resolution, and disputed every inch of ground. The Spaniards not only varied their mode of attack, but, by orders of Cortes changed the weapons with which they fought. They were again armed with the long Chinantlan spears, which they had employed with such success against Narvaez; and, by the firm array in which this enabled them to range themselves, they repelled, with little danger, the loose assault of the Mexicans: incredible numbers of them fell in the conflicts which they renewed every day [h]. While war wasted without, famine began to consume them within the city. The Spanish brigantines, having the entire command of the lake, rendered it almost impossible to convey to the besieged any supply of provisions by water. The immense number of his Indian auxiliaries enabled Cortes to shut up the avenues to the city by land. The stores which Guatimozin had laid up were exhausted, by the multitudes which had

[h] Cortes, Relat. p. 275. C. 276. F. B. Diaz. c. 153.

crowded into the capital, to defend their sovereign and the temples of their gods. Not only the people, but persons of the highest rank, felt the utmost distresses of famine. What they suffered, brought on infectious and mortal distempers, the last calamity that visits besieged cities, and which filled up the measure of their woes [*i*].

But, under the pressure of so many and such various evils, the spirit of Guatimozin remained firm and unsubdued. He rejected, with scorn, every overture of peace from Cortes; and disdaining the idea of submitting to the oppressors of his country, determined not to survive its ruin. The Spaniards continued their progress. At length all the three divisions penetrated into the great square in the centre of the city, and made a secure lodgment there [July 27]. Three-fourths of the city were now reduced, and laid in ruins. The remaining quarter was so closely pressed, that it could not long withstand assailants, who attacked it from their new station with superior advantage, and more assured expectation of success. The Mexican nobles, solicitous to save the life of a monarch whom they revered, prevailed on Guatimozin to retire from a place where resistance was now vain, that he might rouse the more distant provinces of the empire to arms, and maintain there a more successful struggle with the public enemy. In order to facilitate the execution of this measure, they endeavoured to amuse Cortes with overtures of submission, that, while his attention was employed in adjusting the articles of pacification, Guatimozin might escape unperceived. But they made this attempt upon a leader of greater sagacity and discernment than to be deceived by their arts. Cortes suspecting their intention, and aware of what moment it was to defeat it, appointed San-

[*i*] Cortes, Relat. 276. E. 277. F. B. Diaz. c. 155. Gomara, Cron. c. 141.

doval, the officer on whose vigilance he could most perfectly rely, to take the command of the brigantines, with strict injunctions to watch every motion of the enemy. Sandoval, attentive to the charge, observing some large canoes crowded with people rowing across the lake with extraordinary rapidity, instantly gave the signal to chace. Garcia Holguin, who commanded the swiftest-sailing brigantine, soon overtook them, and was preparing to fire on the foremost canoe, which seemed to carry some person whom all the rest followed and obeyed. At once the rowers dropt their oars, and all on board, throwing down their arms, conjured him with cries and tears to forbear, as the emperor was there. Holguin eagerly seized his prize, and Guatimozin, with a dignified composure, gave himself up into his hands, requesting only that no insult might be offered to the empress or his children. When conducted to Cortes, he appeared neither with the sullen fierceness of a barbarian, nor with the dejection of a suppliant. "I have done," said he, addressing himself to the Spanish general, "what became a monarch. I have defended my people to the last extremity. Nothing now remains but to die. Take this dagger," laying his hand on one which Cortes wore, "plant it in my breast, and put an end to a life which can no longer be of use [*k*]."

As soon as the fate of their sovereign was known, the resistance of the Mexicans ceased; and Cortes took possession of that small part of the capital [August 13] which yet remained undestroyed. Thus terminated the siege of Mexico, the most memorable event in the conquest of America. It continued seventy-five days, hardly one of which passed without some extraordinary effort of one party in the attack, or of the other in the defence of a city,

[*k*] Cortes, Relat. 279. B. Diaz. c. 156. Gomara, Cron. c. 142. Herrera, dec. 3. lib. ii. c. 7.

on the fate of which both knew that the fortune of the empire depended. As the struggle here was more obstinate, it was likewise more equal, than any between the inhabitants of the Old and New Worlds. The great abilities of Guatimozin, the number of his troops, the peculiar situation of his capital, so far counterbalanced the superiority of the Spaniards in arms and discipline, that they must have relinquished the enterprise, if they had trusted for success to themselves alone. But Mexico was overturned by the jealousy of neighbours who dreaded its power, and by the revolt of subjects impatient to shake off its yoke. By their effectual aid, Cortes was enabled to accomplish what, without such support, he would hardly have ventured to attempt. How much soever this account of the reduction of Mexico may detract, on the one hand, from the marvellous relations of some Spanish writers, by ascribing that to simple and obvious causes which they attribute to the romantic valour of their countrymen, it adds, on the other, to the merit and abilities of Cortes, who, under every disadvantage, acquired such an ascendant over unknown nations, as to render them instruments towards carrying his schemes into execution [l].

The exultation of the Spaniards, on accomplishing this arduous enterprise, was at first excessive. But this was quickly damped by the cruel disappointment of those sanguine hopes, which had animated them amidst so many hardships and dangers. Instead of the inexhaustible wealth which they expected from becoming masters of Montezuma's treasures, and the ornaments of so many temples, their rapaciousness could collect only an inconsiderable booty amidst ruins and desolation [m]. Guatimo-

[l] See NOTE CXXI.

[m] The gold and silver, according to Cortes, amounted only to 120,000 pesos, Relat. 280, A. a sum much inferior to that which the Spaniards had formerly divided in Mexico.

zin, aware of his impending fate, had ordered what remained of the riches amassed by his ancestors to be thrown into the lake. The Indian auxiliaries, while the Spaniards were engaged in conflict with the enemy, had carried off the most valuable part of the spoil. The sum to be divided among the conquerors was so small, that many of them disdained to accept of the pittance which fell to their share, and all murmured and exclaimed; some, against Cortes and his confidants, whom they suspected of having secretly appropriated to their own use a large portion of the riches which should have been brought into the common stock; others, against Guatimozin, whom they accused of obstinacy, in refusing to discover the place where he had hidden his treasure.

Arguments, intreaties, and promises, were employed in order to soothe them, but with so little effect, that Cortes, from solicitude to check this growing spirit of discontent, gave way to a deed which stains the glory of all his great actions. Without regarding the former dignity of Guatimozin, or feeling any reverence for those virtues which he had displayed, he subjected the unhappy monarch, together with his chief favourite, to torture, in order to force from them a discovery of the royal treasures, which it was supposed they had concealed. Guatimozin bore whatever the refined cruelty of his tormentors could inflict, with the invincible fortitude of an American warrior. His fellow-sufferer, overcome by the violence of the anguish, turned a dejected eye towards his master, which seemed to implore his permission to reveal all that he knew. But the high-spirited prince, darting on him a look of authority mingled with scorn, checked his weakness by asking, "Am I now reposing on a bed of flowers?" Overawed by the reproach, the favourite persevered in his dutiful silence, and expired. Cortes, ashamed of a scene so horrid, rescued the royal victim from the

hands of his torturers, and prolonged a life reserved for new indignities and sufferings [*m*].

The fate of the capital, as both parties had foreseen, decided that of the empire. The provinces submitted one after another to the conquerors. Small detachments of Spaniards marching through them without interruption, penetrated in different quarters to the great Southern Ocean, which, according to the ideas of Columbus, they imagined would open a short as well as easy passage to the East Indies, and secure to the crown of Castile all the envied wealth of those fertile regions [*n*]; and the active mind of Cortes began already to form schemes for attempting this important discovery [*o*].

He did not know, that during the progress of his victorious arms in Mexico, the very scheme, of which he began to form some idea, had been undertaken and accomplished. As this is one of the most splendid events in the history of the Spanish discoveries, and has been productive of effects peculiarly interesting to those extensive provinces which Cortes had now subjected to the crown of Castile, the account of its rise and progress merits a particular detail.

Ferdinand Magalhaens, or Magellan, a Portuguese gentleman of honourable birth, having served several years in the East Indies, with distinguished valour, under the famous Albuquerque, demanded the recompence which he thought due to his services, with the boldness natural to a high-spirited soldier. But as his general would not grant his suit, and he expected greater justice from his sovereign, whom he knew to be a good judge and a generous rewarder of merit, he quitted India abruptly, and returned to Lisbon. In order to induce Emanuel to listen more

[*m*] B. Diaz. c. 157. Gomara, Cron, c. 146. Herrera, dec. 3. lib. ii. c. 8. Torquem. Mon. Ind. i. 574. [*n*] Cortes, Relat. 280. D, &c. B. Diaz. c. 157. [*o*] Herrera, dec. 3. lib. ii. c. 17. Gomara, Cron. c. 149.

favourably to his claim, he not only stated his past services, but offered to add to them by conducting his countrymen to the Molucca or Spice islands, by holding a westerly course; which he contended would be both shorter and less hazardous than that which the Portuguese now followed by the Cape of Good Hope, through the immense extent of the Eastern Ocean. This was the original and favourite project of Columbus, and Magellan founded his hopes of success on the ideas of that great navigator, confirmed by many observations, the result of his own naval experience, as well as that of his countrymen in their intercourse with the East. But though the Portuguese monarchs had the merit of having first awakened and encouraged the spirit of discovery in that age, it was their destiny, in the course of a few years, to reject two grand schemes for this purpose, the execution of which would have been attended with a great accession of glory to themselves, and of power to their kingdom. In consequence of some ill-founded prejudice against Magellan, or of some dark intrigue which contemporary historians have not explained, Emanuel would neither bestow the recompence which he claimed, nor approve of the scheme which he proposed; and dismissed him with a disdainful coldness intolerable to a man conscious of what he deserved, and animated with the sanguine hopes of success peculiar to those who are capable of forming or of conducting new and great undertakings. In a transport of resentment [1517], Magellan formally renounced his allegiance to an ungrateful master, and fled to the court of Castile, where he expected that his talents would be more justly estimated. He endeavoured to recommend himself by offering to execute, under the patronage of Spain, that scheme, which he had laid before the court of Portugal, the accomplishment of which, he knew, would wound the monarch against whom he



was exasperated in the most tender part. In order to establish the justness of his theory, he produced the same arguments which he had employed at Lisbon; acknowledging, at the same time, that the undertaking was both arduous and expensive, as it could not be attempted but with a squadron of considerable force, and victualled for at least two years. Fortunately, he applied to a minister who was not apt to be deterred, either by the boldness of a design, or the expence of carrying it into execution. Cardinal Ximenes, who at that time directed the affairs of Spain, discerning at once what an increase of wealth and glory would accrue to his country by the success of Magellan's proposal, listened to it with a most favourable ear. Charles V. on his arrival in his Spanish dominions, entered into the measure with no less ardour, and orders were issued for equipping a proper squadron at the public charge, of which the command was given to Magellan, whom the king honoured with the habit of St. Jago and the title of Captain-General [p].

On the tenth of August one thousand five hundred and nineteen, Magellan sailed from Seville with five ships, which, according to the ideas of the age, were deemed to be of considerable force, though the burden of the largest did not exceed one hundred and twenty tons. The crews of the whole amounted to two hundred and thirty-four men, among whom were some of the most skilful pilots in Spain, and several Portuguese sailors, in whose experience, as more extensive, Magellan placed still greater confidence. After touching at the Canaries, he stood directly south towards the equinoctial line along the coast of America, but was so long retarded by tedious calms, and spent so much time in searching every

[p] Herrera, dec. 2. lib. ii. c. 19. lib. iv. c. 9. Gomara, Hist. c. 91. Dalrymple's Col. of Voyages to the South Pacific Ocean, vol. i. p. 1, &c.



bay and inlet for that communication with the Southern Ocean which he wished to discover, that he did not reach the river De la Plata till the twelfth of January [1520]. That spacious opening through which its vast body of water pours into the Atlantic allured him to enter; but after sailing up it for some days, he concluded, from the shallowness of the stream and the freshness of the water, that the wished-for strait was not situated there, and continued his course towards the south. On the thirty-first of March he arrived in the port of St. Julian, about forty-eight degrees south of the line, where he resolved to winter. In this uncomfortable station he lost one of his squadron, and the Spaniards suffered so much from the excessive rigour of the climate, that the crews of three of his ships, headed by their officers, rose in open mutiny, and insisted on relinquishing the visionary project of a desperate adventurer, and returning directly to Spain. This dangerous insurrection Magellan suppressed by an effort of courage no less prompt than intrepid, and inflicted exemplary punishments on the ringleaders. With the remainder of his followers, overawed but not reconciled to his scheme, he continued his voyage towards the south, and at length discovered, near the fifty-third degree of latitude, the mouth of a strait, into which he entered, notwithstanding the murmurs and remonstrances of the people under his command. After sailing twenty days in that winding dangerous channel, to which he gave his own name, and where one of his ships deserted him, the great Southern Ocean opened to his view, and with tears of joy he returned thanks to Heaven for having thus far crowned his endeavours with success [q].

But he was still at a greater distance than he imagined from the object of his wishes. He sailed

[q] Herrera, dec. 2. lib. iv. c. 10. lib. ix. c. 10, &c. Gomara, Hist. c. 92. Pigafetta Viaggio ap. Ramus. ii. p. 352, &c.

during three months and twenty days in an uniform direction towards the north-west, without discovering land. In this voyage, the longest that had ever been made in the unbounded ocean, he suffered incredible distress. His stock of provisions was almost exhausted, the water became putrid, the men were reduced to the shortest allowance with which it was possible to sustain life, and the scurvy, the most dreadful of all the maladies with which sea-faring people are afflicted, began to spread among the crew. One circumstance alone afforded them some consolation; they enjoyed an uninterrupted course of fair weather, with such favourable winds, that Magellan bestowed on that ocean the name of *Pacific*, which it still retains. When reduced to such extremity that they must have sunk under their sufferings, they fell in with a cluster of small but fertile islands [March 6], which afforded them refreshments in such abundance, that their health was soon re-established. From these isles, which he called *De los Landrones*, he proceeded on his voyage, and soon made a more important discovery of the islands now known by the name of the *Philippines*. In one of these he got into an unfortunate quarrel with the natives, who attacked him with a numerous body of troops well armed; and while he fought at the head of his men with his usual valour, he fell [April 26] by the hands of those barbarians, together with several of his principal officers.

The expedition was prosecuted under other commanders. After visiting many of the smaller isles scattered in the eastern part of the Indian ocean, they touched at the great island of Borneo [Nov. 8], and at length landed in Tidore, one of the Moluccas, to the astonishment of the Portuguese, who could not comprehend how the Spaniards, by holding a westerly course, had arrived at that sequestered seat of their most valuable commerce, which they themselves had

discovered by sailing in an opposite direction. There, and in the adjacent isles, the Spaniards found a people acquainted with the benefits of extensive trade, and willing to open an intercourse with a new nation. They took in a cargo of the precious spices, which are the distinguished production of those islands; and with that, as well as with specimens of the rich commodities yielded by the other countries which they had visited, the *Victory*, which, of the two ships that remained of the squadron, was most fit for a long voyage, set sail for Europe [Jan. 1522], under the command of Juan Sebastian del Cano. He followed the course of the Portuguese, by the Cape of Good Hope, and, after many disasters and sufferings, he arrived at St. Lucar on the 7th of September one thousand five hundred and twenty-two, having sailed round the globe in the space of three years and twenty-eight days [r].

Though an untimely fate deprived Magellan of the satisfaction of accomplishing this great undertaking, his contemporaries, just to his memory and talents, ascribed to him not only the honour of having formed the plan, but of having surmounted almost every obstacle to the completion of it; and in the present age his name is still ranked among the highest in the roll of eminent and successful navigators. The naval glory of Spain now eclipsed that of every other nation; and by a singular felicity she had the merit, in the course of a few years, of discovering a new continent almost as large as that part of the earth which was formerly known, and of ascertaining by experience the form and extent of the whole terraqueous globe.

The Spaniards were not satisfied with the glory of having first encompassed the earth; they expected to derive great commercial advantages from

[r] Herrera, dec. 3. lib. i. c. 3. 9. lib. iv. c. i. Gomara, Cron, c. 93, &c. Pigasetta ap. Ramus. ii. p. 361, &c.

this new and boldest effort of their maritime skill. The men of science among them contended, that the spice islands, and several of the richest countries in the East, were so situated as to belong of right to the crown of Castile, in consequence of the partition made by Alexander VI. The merchants, without attending to this discussion, engaged eagerly in that lucrative and alluring commerce, which was now opened to them. The Portuguese, alarmed at the intrusion of such formidable rivals, remonstrated and negociated in Europe, while in Asia they obstructed the trade of the Spaniards by force of arms. Charles V. not sufficiently instructed with respect to the importance of this valuable branch of commerce, or distracted by the multiplicity of his schemes and operations, did not afford his subjects proper protection. At last, the low state of his finances, exhausted by the efforts of his arms in every part of Europe, together with the dread of adding a new war with Portugal to those in which he was already engaged, induced him to make over his claim of the Moluccas to the Portuguese for three hundred and fifty thousand ducats. He reserved, however, to the crown of Castile the right of reviving its pretensions on repayment of that sum; but other objects engrossed his attention and that of his successors; and Spain was finally excluded from a branch of commerce in which it was engaging with sanguine expectations of profit [s].

Though the trade with the Moluccas was relinquished, the voyage of Magellan was followed by commercial effects of great moment to Spain. Philip II. in the year one thousand five hundred and sixty-four, reduced those islands which he discovered in the Eastern Ocean to subjection, and established settlements there; between which and the kingdom of New Spain, a regular intercourse, the nature of

[s] Herrera, dec. 3. lib. vi. c. 5, &c. dec. 4. lib. v. c. 7, &c.

which shall be explained in its proper place, is still carried on. I return now to the transactions in New Spain.

At the time that Cortes was acquiring such extensive territories for his native country, and preparing the way for future conquests, it was his singular fate not only to be destitute of any commission or authority from the sovereign whom he was serving with such successful zeal, but to be regarded as an undutiful and seditious subject. By the influence of Fonseca, Bishop of Burgos, his conduct in assuming the government of New Spain was declared to be an irregular usurpation, in contempt of the royal authority; and Christoval de Tapia received a commission, empowering him to supersede Cortes, to seize his person, to confiscate his effects, to make a strict scrutiny into his proceedings, and to transmit the result of all the enquiries carried on in New Spain to the council of the Indies, of which the Bishop of Burgos was president. A few weeks after the reduction of Mexico, Tapia landed at Vera Cruz with the royal mandate to strip its conqueror of its power, and to treat him as a criminal. But Fonseca had chosen a very improper instrument to wreak his vengeance on Cortes. Tapia had neither the reputation nor the talents that suited the high command to which he was appointed. Cortes, while he publicly expressed the most respectful veneration for the emperor's authority, secretly took measures to defeat the effect of his commission; and having involved Tapia and his followers in a multiplicity of negotiations and conferences, in which he sometimes had recourse to threats, but more frequently employed bribes and promises, he at length prevailed on that weak man to abandon a province which he was unworthy of governing [*t*].

[*t*] Herrera, dec. 3. lib. iii. c. 16. dec. iv. c. 1. Cortes, Relat. 281. E. B. Diaz. c. 158.

But notwithstanding the fortunate dexterity with which he had eluded this danger, Cortes was so sensible of the precarious tenure by which he held his power, that he dispatched deputies to Spain [May 15], with a pompous account of the success of his arms, with farther specimens of the productions of the country, and with rich presents to the emperor, as the earnest of future contributions from his new conquest; requesting, in recompence for all his services, the approbation of his proceedings, and that he might be entrusted with the government of those dominions, which his conduct, and the valour of his followers, had added to the crown of Castile. The juncture in which his deputies reached the court was favourable. The internal commotions in Spain, which had disquieted the beginning of Charles' reign, were just appeased [u]. The ministers had leisure to turn their attention towards foreign affairs.—The account of Cortes' victories filled his countrymen with admiration. The extent and value of his conquests became the object of vast and interesting hopes. Whatever stain he might have contracted, by the irregularity of the steps which he took in order to attain power, was so fully effaced by the splendour and merit of the great actions which this had enabled him to perform, that every heart revolted at the thought of inflicting any censure on a man, whose services entitled him to the highest marks of distinction. The public voice declared warmly in favour of his pretensions, and Charles arriving in Spain about this time, adopted the sentiments of his subjects with a youthful ardour. Notwithstanding the claims of Velasquez, and the partial representations of the Bishop of Burgos, the emperor appointed Cortes captain-general and governor of New Spain, judging that no person was so capable of maintaining the royal authority, or of es-

[u] Hist. of Charles V. vol. ii. b. iii.

establishing good order both among his Spanish and Indian subjects, as the victorious leader whom the former had long been accustomed to obey, and the latter had been taught to fear and to respect [*x*].

Even before his jurisdiction received this legal sanction, Cortes ventured to exercise all the powers of a governor, and by various arrangements, endeavoured to render his conquest a secure and beneficial acquisition to his country. He determined to establish the seat of government in its ancient station, and to raise Mexico again from its ruins ; and having conceived high ideas concerning the future grandeur of the state of which he was laying the foundation, he began to rebuild its capital on a plan which hath gradually formed the most magnificent city in the New World. At the same time, he employed skilful persons to search for mines in different parts of the country, and opened some which were found to be richer than any which the Spaniards had hitherto discovered in America. He detached his principal officers into the remote provinces, and encouraged them to settle there, not only by bestowing upon them large tracts of land, but by granting them the same dominion over the Indians, and the same right to their service, which the Spaniards had assumed in the islands.

It was not, however, without difficulty that the Mexican empire could be entirely reduced into the form of a Spanish colony. Enraged and rendered desperate by oppression, the natives often forgot the superiority of their enemies, and ran to arms in defence of their liberties. In every contest, however, the European valour and discipline prevailed. But fatally for the honour of their country, the Spaniards sullied the glory redounding from these repeated victories by their mode of treating the vanquished

[*x*] Herrera, dec. 3. lib. iv. c. 3. Gomara, Cron. c. 164, 165. B. Diaz. c. 167, 168.



people. After taking Guatimozin, and becoming masters of his capital, they supposed that the king of Castile entered on possession of all the rights of the captive monarch, and affected to consider every effort of the Mexicans to assert their own independence, as the rebellion of vassals against their sovereign, or the mutiny of slaves against their master. Under the sanction of those ill-founded maxims, they violated every right that should be held sacred between hostile nations. After each insurrection, they reduced the common people in the provinces which they subdued, to the most humiliating of all conditions, that of personal servitude. Their chiefs, supposed to be more criminal, were punished with greater severity, and put to death in the most ignominious or the most excruciating mode, that the insolence or the cruelty of their conquerors could devise. In almost every district of the Mexican empire, the progress of the Spanish arms is marked with blood, and with deeds so atrocious, as disgrace the enterprising valour that conducted them to success. In the country of Panuco, sixty caziques or leaders, and four hundred nobles, were burnt at one time. Nor was this shocking barbarity perpetrated in any sudden sally of rage, or by a commander of inferior note. It was the act of Sandoval, an officer whose name is entitled to the second rank in the annals of New Spain, and executed after a solemn consultation with Cortes; and to complete the horror of the scene, the children and relations of the wretched victims were assembled, and compelled to be spectators of their dying agonies [*y*]. It seems hardly possible to exceed in horror this dreadful example of severity; but it was followed by another, which affected the Mexicans still more sensibly, as it gave them a most feeling proof of their own degradation, and of the small regard which their haughty

[*y*] Cortes, Relat. 291. C. Gomara, Cron. c. 155.



masters retained for the ancient dignity and splendour of their state. On a slight suspicion, confirmed by very imperfect evidence, that Guatimozin had formed a scheme to shake off the yoke, and to excite his former subjects to take arms, Cortes, without the formality of a trial, ordered the unhappy monarch, together with the caziques of Tezeuco and Tacuba, the two persons of greatest eminence in the empire, to be hanged; and the Mexicans, with astonishment and horror, beheld this disgraceful punishment inflicted upon persons, to whom they were accustomed to look up with reverence, hardly inferior to that which they paid to the gods themselves [z]. The example of Cortes and his principal officers, encouraged and justified persons of subordinate rank to venture upon committing greater excesses. Nuno de Guzman, in particular, stained an illustrious name by deeds of peculiar enormity and rigour, in various expeditions which he conducted [a].

One circumstance, however, saved the Mexicans from farther consumption, perhaps from one as complete as that which hath depopulated the islands. The first conquerors did not attempt to search for the precious metals in the bowels of the earth. They were neither sufficiently wealthy to carry on the expensive works which are requisite for opening those deep recesses where nature has concealed the veins of gold and silver, nor sufficiently skilful to perform the ingenious operations by which those precious metals are separated from their respective ores. They were satisfied with the more simple method, practised by the Indians, of washing the earth carried down rivers and torrents from the mountains, and collecting the grains of native metal deposited there. The rich mines of New Spain,

[z] Gomara, Cron. c. 170. B. Diaz. c. 177. Herrera, dec. 3. lib. viii. c. 9. See NOTE CXXII. [a] Herrera, dec. 4 & 5, *passim*.

which have poured forth their treasures with such profusion on every quarter of the globe, were not discovered for several years after the conquest [*b*]. By that time [1552, &c.] a more orderly government and police were introduced into the colony; experience, derived from former errors, had suggested many useful and humane regulations for the protection and preservation of the Indians; and though it then became necessary to increase the number of those employed in the mines, and they were engaged in a species of labour more pernicious to the human constitution, they suffered less hardship or diminution than from the ill-judged, but less extensive, schemes of the first conquerors.

While it was the lot of the Indians to suffer, their new masters seem not to have derived any considerable wealth from their ill-conducted researches. According to the usual fate of first settlers in new colonies, it was their lot to encounter danger, and to struggle with difficulties; the fruits of their victories and toils were reserved for times of tranquillity, and reaped by successors of greater industry, but of inferior merit. The early historians of America abound with accounts of the sufferings and of the poverty of its conquerors [*c*]. In New Spain, their condition was rendered more grievous by a peculiar arrangement. When Charles V. advanced Cortes to the government of that country, he at the same time appointed certain commissioners to receive and administer the royal revenue there, with independent jurisdiction [*d*]. These men, chosen from inferior stations in various departments of public business at Madrid, were so much elevated with their promotion, that they thought they were called to act a part of the first consequence. But being accustomed to the minute formalities of office, and having contracted

[*b*] Herrera, dec. 8. lib. x. c. 21.

[*c*] Cortes, Relat.

283. F. B. Diaz. c. 209.

[*d*] Herrera, dec. 3. lib. iv. c. 3.

the narrow ideas suited to the sphere in which they had hitherto moved, they were astonished, on arriving in Mexico [1524], at the high authority which Cortes exercised, and could not conceive that the mode of administration, in a country recently subdued and settled, must be different from what took place in one where tranquillity and regular government had been long established. In their letters, they represented Cortes as an ambitious tyrant, who having usurped a jurisdiction superior to law, aspired at independence, and by his exorbitant wealth, and extensive influence, might accomplish those disloyal schemes which he apparently meditated [*e*]. These insinuations made such deep impression upon the Spanish ministers, most of whom had been formed to business under the jealous and rigid administration of Ferdinand, that, unmindful of all Cortes' past services, and regardless of what he was then suffering in conducting that extraordinary expedition, in which he advanced from the lake of Mexico to the western extremities of Honduras [*f*], they infused the same suspicions into the mind of their master, and prevailed on him to order a solemn inquest to be made into his conduct [1525], with powers to the licentiate Ponce de Leon, entrusted with that commission, to seize his person, if he should find that expedient, and send him prisoner to Spain [*g*].

The sudden death of Ponce de Leon, a few days after his arrival in New Spain, prevented the execution of this commission. But as the object of his appointment was known, the mind of Cortes was deeply wounded with this unexpected return for services which far exceeded whatever any subject of Spain had rendered to his sovereign. He endeavoured, however, to maintain his station, and to

[*e*] Ibid. lib. v. c. 14.

[*f*] See NOTE CXXII.

[*g*] Herrera, dec. 3. lib. viii. c. 14, 15.

recover the confidence of the court. But every person in office, who had arrived from Spain since the conquest, was a spy upon his conduct, and with malicious ingenuity gave an unfavourable representation of all his actions. The apprehensions of Charles and his ministers increased. A new commission of enquiry was issued [1528], with more extensive powers, and various precautions were taken in order to prevent or to punish him, if he should be so presumptuous as to attempt what was inconsistent with the fidelity of a subject [*h*]. Cortes beheld the approaching crisis of his fortune with all the violent emotions natural to a haughty mind, conscious of high desert, and receiving unworthy treatment. But though some of his desperate followers urged him to assert his own rights against his ungrateful country, and with a bold hand to seize that power which the courtiers meanly accused him of coveting [*i*], he retained such self-command, or was actuated with such sentiments of loyalty, as to reject their dangerous counsels, and to choose the only course in which he could secure his own dignity, without departing from his duty. He resolved not to expose himself to the ignominy of a trial, in that country which had been the scene of his triumphs; but without waiting for the arrival of his judges, to repair directly to Castile, and commit himself and his cause to the justice and generosity of his sovereign [*k*].

Cortes appeared in his native country with the splendour that suited the conqueror of a mighty kingdom. He brought with him a great part of his wealth, many jewels and ornaments of great value, several curious productions of the country [*l*], and was attended by some Mexicans of the first rank,

[*h*] Ibid. c. 15. dec. 4. lib. ii. c. 1. lib. iv. c. 9, 10. B. Diaz. c. 172. 196. Gomara, Cron. c. 166.

[*i*] B. Diaz. c. 194.

[*k*] Herrera, dec. 3. lib. iv. c. 8.

[*l*] See NOTE CXXIV.

as well as by the most considerable of his own officers. His arrival in Spain removed at once every suspicion and fear that had been entertained with respect to his intentions. The emperor, having now nothing to apprehend from the designs of Cortes, received him like a person whom consciousness of his own innocence had brought into the presence of his master, and who was entitled, by the eminence of his services, to the highest marks of distinction and respect. The order of St. Jago, the title of Marquis del Valle de Guaxaca, the grant of an ample territory in New Spain, were successively bestowed upon him; and as his manners were correct and elegant, although he had passed the greater part of his life among rough adventurers, the emperor admitted him to the same familiar intercourse with himself, that was enjoyed by noblemen of the first rank [m].

But, amidst those external proofs of regard, symptoms of remaining distrust appeared. Though Cortes earnestly solicited to be reinstated in the government of New Spain, Charles, too sagacious to commit such an important charge to a man whom he had once suspected, peremptorily refused to invest him again with powers which he might find it impossible to control. Cortes, though dignified with new titles, returned to Mexico with diminished authority. The military department, with powers to attempt new discoveries, was left in his hands; but the supreme direction of civil affairs was placed on a board, called *The audience of New Spain*. At a subsequent period, when, upon the increase of the colony, the exertion of authority more united and extensive became necessary, Antonio de Mendoza, a nobleman of high rank, was sent thither as *Viceroy*, to take the government into his hands.

This division of power in New Spain, proved, as

[m] Herrera, dec. 3. lib. iv. c. 1. lib. vi. c. 4. B. Diaz. c. 196. Gomara, Cron. c. 182.

was unavoidable, the source of perpetual dissension, which embittered the life of Cortes, and thwarted all his schemes. As he had now no opportunity to display his active talents but in attempting new discoveries, he formed various schemes for that purpose, all of which bear impressions of a genius that delighted in what was bold and splendid. He early entertained an idea, that, either by steering through the gulf of Florida along the east coast of North America, some strait would be found that communicated with the western ocean ; or that, by examining the isthmus of Darien, some passage would be discovered between the North and South Seas [*n*]. But having been disappointed in his expectations with respect to both, he now confined his views to such voyages of discovery as he could make from the ports of New Spain in the South-Sea. There he fitted out successively several small squadrons, which either perished in the attempt, or returned without making any discovery of moment. Cortes, weary of entrusting the conduct of his operations to others, took the command of a new armament in person [1536], and, after enduring incredible hardships, and encountering dangers of every species, he discovered the large peninsula of California, and surveyed the greater part of the gulf which separates it from New Spain. The discovery of a country of such extent would have reflected credit on a common adventurer ; but it could add little new honour to the name of Cortes, and was far from satisfying the sanguine expectations which he had formed [*o*]. Disgusted with ill success, to which he had not been accustomed, and weary of contesting with adversaries to whom he considered it as a disgrace to be opposed, he once more sought for redress in his native country [1540].

[*n*] Cortes, Relat. Ram. iii. 294. B. [*o*] Herrera, dec. 5. lib. viii. c. 9, 10. dec. 8. lib. vi. c. 14. Vencgas, Hist. of California. i. 125. Lorenzana, Hist. p. 322, &c.

But his reception there was very different from that which gratitude, and even decency, ought to have secured for him. The merit of his ancient exploits was already, in a great measure, forgotten, or eclipsed by the fame of recent and more valuable conquests in another quarter of America. No service of moment was now expected from a man of declining years, and who began to be unfortunate. The emperor behaved to him with cold civility; his ministers treated him, sometimes with neglect, sometimes with insolence. His grievances received no redress; his claims were urged without effect; and after several years spent in fruitless application to ministers and judges, an occupation the most irksome and mortifying to a man of high spirit, who had moved in a sphere where he was more accustomed to command than to solicit, Cortes ended his days on the second of December one thousand five hundred and forty-seven, in the sixty-second year of his age. His fate was the same with that of all the persons who distinguished themselves in the discovery or conquest of the New World. Envied by his contemporaries, and ill requited by the court which he served, he has been admired and celebrated by succeeding ages. Which has formed the most just estimate of his character, an impartial consideration of his actions must determine.

END OF VOLUME FIRST.

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